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1
BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

OF SOME OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED

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JEWISH RABBIES,

AND

TRANSLATIONS OF PORTIONS OF THEIR

COMMENTARIES,

AND

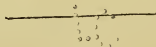
OTHER WORKS,

WITH

ILLUSTRATIVE INTRODUCTIONS AND
NOTES.

BY SAMUEL H. ^{Albion}TURNER, D. D.,

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IN THE GEN. THEO. SEM. OF THE PROT. EPIS. CHURCH.



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ERRATA.

Page 37, line 9, before *to* read *familiar*.

- 83, 2, for ת read ג.
96, 1, before And, read 13.
109, 12, for ultimately, read intimately.
112, 3, for Daniel read David.
117, 7, for צ read ש.
122, 12, for ג read כ.
143, 16, before All, read 6.
169, note * line 2, transpose the Hebrew words.
175, line 9, transpose the Hebrew words.

P R E F A C E.

Among the various benevolent enterprises of the present age, designed to remove the prejudices of ignorance and to extend the knowledge and influence of Christianity, that which aims at the conversion of the Jews is by no means the least important. It has been the unhappy fate of successive generations of that extraordinary people, to be persecuted by all other classes of religionists. Pagans, Mohammedans and Christians of every name, have vied with each other, not only in exposing the Jew to every species of obloquy and insult, but also in plundering his property, and in mutilating, incarcerating and torturing his body. While, in this way, the just providence of an offended God has permitted the imprecation of the forefathers to fall with heavy vengeance on the devoted heads of their descendants, and the blood of the holy One crucified on Calvary to be required of the children of his murderers, the unrighteous and wicked passions of the instruments whereby this punishment has been inflicted are not, on that account, the less to be abhorred, or the persons themselves the less amenable to the rightful Judge of all the earth. Much has Christendom to deplore, and much to answer for, on account of its systematic oppression and

abuse of the descendants of him who is its own progenitor in the faith. It is time that the treatment of Abraham's children, according to the flesh, should be in accordance with the spirit and character of the religion of those who profess to be "blessed with faithful Abraham." And to the really spiritual progeny of the patriarch, it is in the highest degree gratifying to believe, that both in Europe and America God has stirred up the hearts of his faithful people, to desire the salvation of Israel, and to labor for its advancement; a consummation, which was predicted by the prophets, confidently expected by the apostles, and for which the ancient people do seem to have been most wonderfully at least, if not miraculously, preserved among their brethren of mankind.

It must be obvious to every reflecting mind, that, in order to insure probable success in an object so interesting and important, it is essentially necessary to obtain some knowledge of the state of Judaism in the world, of its leading articles of religious belief, and also of the principles and views developed in the works of their standard authorities. The intelligent Christian missionary to the Jews will not content himself with a general acquaintance with his Hebrew Bible. Some knowledge of their Rabbinical works is indispensable, both for his own respectable standing among them, and also that he may be able to develop inconsistencies with the revealed law, and erroneous principles, whereby prejudice is strengthened and religious blindness perpetuated. And here the church of Christ has generally been, and is now, in a very great degree, deficient. The writings of the learned Jews are sealed books to the great mass of the Christian clergy, and it may be presumed that this is true also of some of those whose ministrations are especially directed towards

their conversion. As an illustration of this remark, it may not be improper to mention what is stated of the celebrated Legh Richmond. On one occasion of his preaching to a crowded audience in behalf of the Jews, it was remarked by one of his Israelitish hearers on leaving the chapel, that the preacher did not understand their interpretations of the Hebrew prophets.* The firm persuasion that Christians rightly cherish of the general correctness of their own exposition of the prophecies relating to the Messiah, should not make them indifferent to the views entertained by others, or neglectful of the method whereby these views may be known, and their frequent unsoundness demonstrated.

In harmony with these considerations, and with the view of facilitating, in some slight measure, an acquaintance with Jewish commentary, this little work is now published. The author is aware that his views of a necessary preparation for successful efforts to Christianize the Jews are not likely in the present day to be popular. A careful reading of Jewish books, and an unintermitted study of the Hebrew Bible, in connection with the Greek Testament which embodies its spiritual development, followed also by intelligent and earnest proclamations, proving that Jesus of Nazareth is the true Messiah predicted by the Hebrew prophets, is quite a different thing from golden promises of national supremacy and aristocratic dignity to be enjoyed in the land of Palestine. Some indolent Jews, whose situation would probably be improved by almost any change, and some also of a better class,

* I regret that I cannot verify this anecdote by referring to any authority, yet I am very confident of having met with it in some English publication.

with warm imaginations and lively hopes, may be temporarily influenced by such representations ; but on the more steady, industrious and thoughtful portion of the Hebrew community, influences of a very different kind must be brought to bear. They must be made to feel that Judaism, from its very nature, could not have been intended for perpetuity, some of its judiciary and most of its ceremonial requisitions being only compatible with a peculiar state of society ; that the views of the future which it develops have either already begun to open in the past advent of Messiah and the progress and extent of his spiritual kingdom, or else are not to be hereafter expected, and consequently its prophecies are a failure ; and, that Christianity, not indeed as practically exhibited by the great body of its professed advocates, but as really existing in the system of our Lord and Master, and showing itself in the heavenly characters of its true believers, is that new covenant and law which God declared by his holy prophets, that in due time he would substitute in the place of the earlier and less perfect dispensation. To support such a superstructure, requires a foundation not only solidly laid in deep religious character and zeal, but also in sound Hebrew learning ; and the author is compelled to say, that he cannot discern, in the signs of the times, so far as they have come under his own observation, any very clear indications of its rapid progress. Man's ever changeful theories are readily embraced ; but God's holy word, which stands immutable, and shall so stand for ever, is locked up, even to multitudes of its expounders, in dead languages which they cannot undersand.

The following Biographical Notices and Translations were originally made several years ago. Considerations, which it is unnecessary to mention, have recently deter-

mined the author to present them to the public. If this little volume should be fortunate enough to secure a patronage sufficient to meet the expense of its publication, he will immediately put to press a Glossary of Hebrew words not found in the Bible, and a table of the most usual and important abbreviations, which occur in the Rabbinical writings. He would wish to add the originals of the portions which are here offered in an English translation ; thus presenting the Hebrew student with an apparatus, although very imperfect, to aid him somewhat in reading Jewish writings. He does not venture to go beyond the offer of very moderate assistance, being conscious that his own knowledge in this department of Hebrew Literature, is circumscribed within very narrow limits.

It is hardly necessary to inform the reader, that the biographies have but little claim to originality. They are drawn chiefly from the following sources : namely, WOLF's *Bibliotheca Hebræa* ; BARTOLOCCI's *Bibliotheca magna Rabbinica* ; BASNAGE's *Histoire des Juifs depuis Jesus Christ jusq' a present* ; *Biographie Universelle* ; and JOST's *Geschichte der Israeliten seit der Zeit der Maccabäer bis auf unsre Tage*, *History of the Israelites from the time of the Maccabees until the present*. The account in this last work is by far the most complete. Some time after these notices were prepared, I read a biography of Maimonides, and other Jewish Rabbies, in the *Hebrew Review*. The author has taken his materials almost entirely from Jost, which may serve to explain the coincidence between his account and that contained in the subsequent pages.

In preparing the Translation, I have carefully endeavored to make it intelligible to the merely English reader,

although it was absolutely necessary to introduce in several places the original Biblical Hebrew, particularly where the Jewish commentator advocates a different view from that presented in the English version. The meaning, however, is always given in our own language. Owing to the remarkable brevity which often characterizes these Rabbinical writers, a translator is frequently compelled to add a word or a phrase, in order to make the meaning clear to his readers. Such supplementary clauses are introduced within parentheses. While it was my aim to present the precise meaning of the author, I did not think it necessary to make the translation more literal than the different idiom of the English language seemed to allow. For the benefit of the reader who may wish to study the original writer in his own language, I have generally given the literal meaning in notes.

After all the care which has been bestowed on the translation, the amount of which I must leave to be determined by those readers who have devoted their time and attention to similar pursuits, I am by no means confident that I have always succeeded in perceiving the exact meaning of the original. Corrections, suggested by competent criticism, and accompanied by satisfactory proof, will be gratefully acknowledged and willingly admitted; but vague and general objections, proceeding from that class of persons to whom the Greek proverb, *ῥαυὸν ἐστὶ μωρεῖσθαι ἢ μιμεῖσθαι*,* applies, will be passed over with that silence which is pre-eminently their due.

I have only to add, that, if the reader is disappointed, as most probably he will be, at the meagre character of many parts of these Rabbinical comments, I can assure

* It is easier to ridicule than to imitate.

him, that no part of the original has been withheld. The selections contain the whole exposition, given by these Jewish guides of interpretation, of the portions of scripture commented on; and the translator must not be held responsible for any supposed deficiency. If, however, we make proper allowances for national prepossessions, for the character of the times in which the writers lived, and for the influence of the circumstances which excited or controlled them, we shall rather be surprised at the accuracy of their philological knowledge, than disappointed at the want of a full development of the meaning of the sacred writers. And while we must lament so strong a traditional bias, we cannot but admire that religious feeling which influences a considerable portion of their interpretations, and that comprehensive acquaintance with the text and apparent meaning of God's revelation, which pervades their compositions. In the concluding portions especially, of this volume, Christians, in general, may find materials for profitable reflection, and not a few readers, for instruction.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES.

JARCHI.

RABBI SOLOMON BEN ISAAC is known in Jewish writings by the technical word *Rashi*, which is formed by the initial letters of his title, and of his name, Solomon Jarchi;* the latter being the real, or as many think, the fictitious name of his family. According to some writers, the name Jarchi, analogous to the Hebrew word *Jareach*, the moon, is derived from Lunel, (luna,) a town in the western part of France, while others imagine it to have been applied to the Rabbi from his supposed knowledge of astronomy. Which of these opinions, or whether either of them is well founded, is doubtful, and of little moment. The origin of the appellation, like that of a multitude of others, is involved in obscurity.

* The first letter is pronounced like *y*.

The exact period of Jarchi's life is also uncertain. According to the most respectable authorities, he was born in Troyes, in France, in the year 1030,* and lived to the age of 75, or, as others say, 64 years. Of his life and history very little is known, although much is related that is fabulous, particularly that he spent seven years in wandering about in various countries, in order to atone for some sin of his father. He was brought up under the superintendence of Rabbi Jacob Ben Jakar, and probably also of Rabbi Gershom, and pursued his studies in the place of his nativity.

Jarchi is the author of a commentary on the entire Hebrew Bible. He wrote also a commentary on the Talmud, and on the *Pirke Avoth*; also some other works, a brief notice of which may be found in Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebræa*, Vol. I. pp. 1067, 1068. The importance and extensiveness of his works have gained for him with posterity, the honor of being regarded as one of the most learned Jews in the departments to which he devoted himself; although he is certainly less judicious in many of his expositions than some others of his nation. This will appear by no means surprising, when it is recollected that his literary acquirements were very limited. Accord-

* Basnage places his birth in the year 1105, and of course makes him flourish in the twelfth century. See Book viii. chap. xiii. sec. 27, and Book ix. chap. x. sec. 17.

ing to Jost, he was unacquainted with natural science, history, geography, mathematics, and languages ; and yet so completely did he master the common sources of Jewish learning, the Bible, the Talmud, and other more recent works, as to make them his own, and to explain them in general to the satisfaction of his pupils. Other writers however, speak of him as being acquainted with ancient languages, philosophy, medicine, and astronomy. They add, also, that with the view of improving himself by foreign instruction, he travelled into Italy, Greece, Palestine, Egypt, Persia, and Germany, visiting all the cities distinguished for Hebrew literature, interrogating the professors, discussing with them points of difficulty, and noting with exactness their various replies.* Still he was not distinguished for extraordinary talents or remarkable perspicacity ; neither was he excited by any dominant inclination to triumph in argument over an antagonist, or to produce something novel. His ruling desire was, to seize upon the simple sense of the sources of religious knowledge, in the hope of illustrating their true meaning. With this object in view, he entered upon his laborious undertaking. He endeavored to explain the more important passages, sometimes grammatically, sometimes by paraphrasing and sup-

* Bartolocci, Part iv., p. 378, 381. *Biographie Universelle*, Tom. 37, p. 109. Basnage calls him one of the most learned of the French Rabbies. Book viii. chap. xiii. sect. 27.

plying what was supposed to be elliptical, and occasionally by means of a French translation. His commentaries are compiled principally from the Chaldee Targum, the Talmud, and other ancient Jewish authorities, the very language of which is often retained. Where his predecessors had introduced legendary narratives, and allegories founded on certain expressions, he contented himself with giving the statements without examining into their truth. Rhenferd says that Jarchi is by no means given to fictions, but relates with remarkable diligence and fidelity the opinions of his predecessors on the more important parts of scripture. By fictions, he means probably, original inventions ; for Jarchi abounds with Rabbinical conceits, drawn, with fidelity no doubt, from writers of higher antiquity. To elicit the philological meaning, rather than to discuss the truth of the results arrived at, characterizes the commentaries of Jarchi, and the school of which he may be considered as the founder. Posterity is more indebted to his patience and industry, than to his genius or profoundness. It is the laborious ox, rather than the soaring eagle, to which this Rabbi may be compared.

The style of this commentator is obscure, both on account of its conciseness and the number of foreign words, particularly French, which he introduces. Wolf informs us, that Rendtorf of Hamburg prepared on the whole of Jarchi's

commentary, notes and observations, which might serve the purpose of a lexicon and version. He mentions also, the commentary of Balthazar Scheid, as very useful in reading Jarchi, because it contains explanations of all the foreign words. Vol. I. p. 1065, 1066. The commentary on the Pentateuch was translated into Latin by John Frederick Breithaupt, and published at Gotha, 4to, in 1710, with brief and learned notes. Also in 1713, the same writer published at the same place, in 4to, a Latin translation of the commentary on the greater and minor prophets, Job, and the Psalms. Other portions of Jarchi's works have also been translated by different persons.

JUDAH HALLEVI,

Author of the Book Cosri.

RABBI JUDAH HALLEVI, (that is, the Levite,) BEN SAMUEL, a Spanish Jew of the twelfth century, was a man of uncommon talent. Well versed in Rabbinical and Arabian literature, he endeavored to spread the influence of learning, and a knowledge of the most important truths, by means of poetry. As he was wealthy, his circumstances afforded him leisure to polish his compositions, according to the principles of prosody then generally admitted. In the judgment of a nearly contemporaneous critic,* he drew largely from the deep treasury of poetic thought and feeling, and surpassed all the writers of his nation who had attempted to build the lofty verse. His hymns of praise are marked by force and ardor,

* Al Charisi, about the year 1200. This writer has laid down some very excellent practical rules, which poets of all periods might apply with advantage. They may be found in Jost's history, vol. vi., p. 159, 160.—Many of Judah's poems and other finished compositions are contained in books of prayers. Bartolucci, part iii. p. 64.

while the bitterest feelings of distress, irresistibly seizing upon the soul, rule in his elegiac poetry.

This remarkable man was not permitted to die a natural death. At the age of fifty, in compliance with the practice of the times, and prompted by an ardent desire to visit the country of his ancestors, he undertook a journey to the promised land. To a poetic mind, such an enterprize possessed high attraction, as a view of the condition of a country, the early history of which had exercised so important an influence on posterity, was well adapted to excite the imagination to strains of pensive melancholy. And in fact, the scenes there presented to the eye, the depopulation of a region once so densely inhabited, the wildness and desolation of a land formerly teeming with luxuriance, the barbarous character and wretched state of the inhabitants, made a strong impression on the mind of the poet. Standing beneath the walls of Jerusalem, his soul was so deeply afflicted with the lamentable condition of his people, that he rent his garments like a mourner, put off his shoes and went on barefoot, singing an elegy, which he had himself composed, on the fall of Jerusalem. A mounted Arab who was near him, but unobserved, made the devotion of the sorrowing Jew a subject of ridicule, and roused to madness by the unhappy man's indifference and supposed obstinacy, he leaped upon him, and trampled him to death under his horse's hoofs.

This unfortunate Rabbi is generally regarded as the author of the *Book Cosri*,* pronounced by the high authority of De Sacy and Labouderie,† to be one of the most valuable and beautiful productions of the Jewish school. The object of this work was to defend the Hebrew religion against the objections of Christians, Mohammedans, philosophical infidels, and Karaite Jews. In order to make it the more attractive, the author connects his subject with the conversion of Bulan, a king of the Chasars; or, according to the representations of some writers, introduces a dialogue between a king by the name of Chosar, and a certain Rabbi, Isaac Sanguer, or Sangari, on the prominent points of religion. In order that the reader may have a clear idea of the origin and design of this Jewish book, it is necessary to lay before him some notices of this people, premising however, that no small portion of fable has been incorporated with the history. The following account is drawn almost entirely from the history of Jost.

* The authorship of this work is much disputed by writers on Jewish literature, some attributing it even to the king himself, whose attachment to Judaism it is designed to confirm. Bartolucci says, that Hallevi was unhesitatingly regarded as the author of the *Book Cosri*, by the most ancient Jews, but that later investigations have involved this matter in considerable doubt. The more general opinion, however is, that the work is rightly ascribed to him. See Wolf, Vol. iv. p. 1022.

† See *Biographie Universelle*, Tome xxii. p. 101, 102.

The Chosars or Chasars are represented as a branch of the more ancient Turkomans,* or according to some old accounts, of common origin with them. This, however, must be left as a matter impossible to be settled. In very early times they inhabited a district of country lying on the west side of the Caspian, and extending as far as the Black Sea. They were incorporated by Attila with the nation of the Huns. Afterwards they became subject to the Bulgarians, but obtained their freedom, and made themselves so powerful as to strike terror into the Persians on the one side and the Greek Empire on the other. The Persian monarch was obliged to secure his country from their invasions by a prodigious wall, the ruins of which excite the travellers' astonishment even at the present day, and the autocrat of the Greeks found it expedient to court their friendship and avail himself of their hardy courage. Frequent alliances were formed with the Chakans or rulers, and their followers were often found among the body guard of the imperial court.

The proximity of this region of country to two seas, giving it at the same time the command of two noble rivers, the Volga and the Don, was a natural encouragement to enterprise and navigation. Trade flourished, and while the merchant fleets

* They are mentioned as "a Turkish or Tartar colony," and as "Eastern Turks," in the ancient *Universal History*, Book iv. chap. ix. and xxx. Vol. xvii. p. 21, and xx. p. 50. 8vo. Lond. 1748.

of Persia and Greece enriched their owners with the productions of the people, the Chasar cities became places of business and wealth, and the splendor of the nation is said to have vied with that of the Califate itself. Victorious in the South and North, the Chasars obtained gold and silver from the more cultivated people, and from the rougher, natural productions, in the way of tribute. Encouraged by a general toleration of religion, Jews, Christians and Musselmans settled in the country, intercourse was unrestrained, and consequently business and intellectual culture gradually spread, and the nation increased in power and in wealth. It is not to be supposed that the new settlers were disregarded by the rulers; on the contrary, they seem to have attracted considerable notice, and their religion became of course the subject of attention. There is reason to believe that the Chakans often availed themselves of the services of these foreigners, in their intercourse at the courts of the emperors and chalifs as well as with inferior chiefs; and the inclination to make proselytes to their respective religions, for which both Christians and Mohammedans were distinguished, must have been felt also in no slight degree, by the sincere Hebrew. Every favorable opportunity would have been seized, in order to awaken attention and conciliate regard to the system of the despised and persecuted Jew.

The supposition therefore is not so extravagant

as some historians have imagined, that, in a very ancient period, the throne of the Chasars may have been occupied by one of this nation. Certain writers, who, it must be confessed, however, do not disdain to alleviate occasionally the dryness of historical facts by drawing on their imagination for the fabulous and extraordinary, have related, that about the year 740, Bulan, or Bula, a wise Chakan or king of the Chasars, having become a convert to Judaism, imposed the profession of this faith as a necessary condition of obtaining the supreme authority. A succession of Jewish Kings is said to have governed the nation more than two centuries and a half, without imposing any restraint on the free exercise of religion.

However slight an impression, says Jost, this Chasar Jewish monarchy may have made on the Eastern Jews, sunk in effeminacy, it was not regarded without interest by the learned Jews of Spain, who began to be distinguished as favorites of the court of Cordova. Hasdai Ben Isaac is said to have addressed a complimentary letter to one of the kings, named Joseph, with an introduction in poetry, according to the taste of the age and people, and in due time to have received from the monarch a gracious answer, in which he informs his western correspondent, that he was the twelfth descendant in a regular line of succession from Bulan. But the authenticity of this correspondence in all probability rests on no better founda-

tion than that of the letters, which some credulous ecclesiastical historians ascribe to our Savior and Abgar, a king of Edessa. Indeed some writers of high respectability consider the Jewish account of the Chasars as altogether fictitious.* Bartolucci, while he states that the name is of frequent occurrence in Jewish books, and that the Nubian geographer places their country on the borders of the Black and Caspian Seas, does not hesitate to employ the following very decided language. "Inasmuch as no geographical authority of any weight to my knowledge, mentions this region, nor even Benjamin in his Itinerary, I consider the account of it, as given by the Rabbins and others who have borrowed from them, as wholly without historical authority." The fictitious character of the correspondence just mentioned, and also of the colloquy which forms the subject of the book *Cosri*, is, in the opinion of the same very learned authority, indubitable.

The value and importance of the book, however, is wholly independent of the historical correctness of either the correspondence or the colloquy, or even of the authorship of the work. The supposed reply of the King of the Chasars suggests to the writer the plan and subject of his work *Cosri*, the name of which (a *Cosrite*,) denotes the nation of one of the leading par-

* Basnage, Book ix. chap. i. sec. 4, 14. Bartolucci, Part iii. p. 62.

ties. The book consists of five divisions. It contains a defence of Rabbinical Judaism against Philosophers, Christians, Mohammedans and Karaites. The form of the work is as follows: The king repeatedly hears in a dream a voice announcing, "thy views are good, but not so thy conduct." In order then to ascertain what religion was best adapted to instruct him to do well, he applies in course to an Epicurean philosopher, a Christian and a Mohammedan. A philosophical religion, he soon perceives, must rest on arguments of mere probability, and cannot be reduced to certainty. Christianity and Mohammedanism recognize the divine authority of the Jewish religion, while they are themselves open to objections. Hence he concludes to attach himself to the despised people of the Jews, whose doctrines are divine and uniform, however diversified their conditions and settlements in the world.*

In order to lead to this agreeable result, he introduces a Jew, who engages the yet doubting monarch in a long conversation on the subject of religion, in the course of which he lays before him a sound exposition of the Hebrew doctrines respecting God and the divine government of the world. The general sentiments contained in this

* See *Bemerkungen zum Alten Testament aus dem Buch Cosri*, Remarks on the Old Testament from the Book Cosri, by DR. FR. KOESTER, in the *Theologische Studien, und Kritiken* for 1837, No. 1. p. 153 ss.

work are such as may be found in some other Jewish productions of that period, and are designed to show that the Hebrew system of religion and its rites are in unison with philosophy and enlightened reason. The author proves the God of the Israelites to be the true God, the creator and preserver of all things. He treats successively, and with much eloquence, of the Deity, his existence, name and attributes, of the creation of the world and of angels; of scripture and its divine authority; of Providence, divine decrees, free will, the resurrection, and everlasting life; of divine worship, prayer, idolatry; of the dignity of the Jewish people, of the promised land, the Hebrew language and sacred poetry; of the soul, its faculties and immortality; of prophecy, the caballa and caballistic mysteries.

This valuable work of Rabbi Judah was originally written in Arabic, and the Hebrew now existing is a translation, which retains very considerably the idiom of the original language. It was rendered into Latin by the younger Buxtorf, and published with notes at Basle, in 1660, 4to. In the preface the translator has inserted the correspondence ascribed to Hasdai and king Joseph. Another version of the *Cosri* in Spanish was published by Abendana, a very learned Jew, at Amsterdam, in 1663, whose translation, Simon prefers to that of Buxtorf.*

**Biographie Universelle*, Tome xxii. p. 101.

ABEN EZRA.

RABBI ABRAHAM BEN MEIR EZRA* was born in Toledo, probably about the beginning of the twelfth century, and descended from one of the most distinguished Jewish families. He was nearly related to Rabbi Judah Hallevi, their mothers being sisters. But he must have been considerably younger than his distinguished cousin, as he formed a still more intimate connection with him by marrying his daughter, a short time before her father made his pilgrimage to Jerusalem. He is said† to have been indebted to his genius and wit for the possession of this fair and wealthy heiress. Her mother had so often and importunately solicited her husband to furnish their daughter with a suitable partner, that Rabbi Judah swore one evening (not very like a good father and a wise man, it must be confessed,) to

* Or, Rabbi Abraham, son of Meir and grandson of Ezra. Aben is used to denote grandson. He is also called by way of distinction, the wise, and is designated by abbreviations, which may be seen in Wolf, Vol. I. p. 71.

† I give this amusing account on the authority of Jost.

give her to the first Jew who should offer himself on the following day. This was none other than Aben Ezra, dressed as a traveller, whose reputation had not failed to reach the ear of the Rabbi, although they were personally unknown to each other. As might well be supposed, the mother was shocked at the thought of bestowing her lovely daughter and only child on a youthful stranger so meanly apparelled, but her husband very soon observed that he had a young man of mind before him, who gave promise of ripe scholarship, and without hesitation admitted him into the number of his pupils. Aben Ezra affected ignorance, and employed himself in the first rudiments of knowledge, making, as may readily be supposed, rapid and satisfactory progress. On a certain evening Rabbi Judah remained unusually long in his study, and it was only after repeated entreaties that he was prevailed on to leave it for the supper table. The stranger's inquiries being unable to draw from his host the true cause of his delay, the Rabbi's wife went to his study and brought thence the fragments of a Hebrew poem which had engaged his attention, and which he had not been able to finish to his satisfaction. Aben Ezra ran through the composition, made with his pen some corrections, and finished the whole to the great delight of his teacher, who, immediately on reading it, embraced his pupil and exclaimed, "you are certainly the celebrated Aben Ezra, and welcome to me as a

son-in-law !” His guest then threw off the mask, and the marriage was shortly after celebrated.

A few years subsequently to this event, Aben Ezra made a literary tour of several countries of Europe. From thence he extended his journey to Palestine, where he had frequent communications with the learned men of Tiberias, on the subject of Masoretical text. He travelled through the Grecian islands, and resided a long time at Rhodes, where in 1194* he terminated a life of seventy-five years, almost fifty of which had been spent in visiting various countries, and in preparing his numerous works. He wrote commentaries on the whole Bible, and also various other works, a particular account of which may be found in Wolf, I. p. 73–86, and in the *Biographie Universelle*, Tom. I, p. 75. He was thoroughly acquainted with the Hebrew and Arabic tongues, conversant with the whole extent of Rabbinical learning, and master of the philosophy of his time. Bartolucci calls him an excellent philosopher, astronomer, physician, poet, grammarian, cabbalist and interpreter of scripture. His extraordinary acquisitions are less worthy of admiration, than the powers of his mind. If the appellation, *hahakim*, the wise, can justly be applied to any Jew, it certainly belongs of peculiar right to Aben Ezra. He is generally con-

* According to Basnage, 1174. Book ix. chap. x. sect. 3.

sidered by competent judges as the most literal and judicious of Jewish expositors. The style of his works is characterized by purity, and so great conciseness as to occasion frequent obscurity. He had examined the Bible with unusual penetration and care, availing himself of the assistance, yet not unduly biased by the authority, of the more ancient expositors, and he brought the treasures of his knowledge, and the sharpness of his wit, to expose erroneous interpretations, and to settle the correct sense. He shows an attachment to Rabbinism, although he is not without the liberalism of the Karaite school,* his views being often free, and his exposition of scripture simple and unaffected. During his lifetime he enjoyed the distinction of a most influential character, and the greatest scholars did not hesitate to advance him above all his predecessors. Maimonides, the most distinguished of his contemporaries, earnestly recommended to his own son, a careful study of the works of Aben Ezra, as superior to any other for intellectual force and solid learning.

* Japheth Levi, a distinguished Rabbi of this school, was in early life one of Aben Ezra's instructors.

MAIMONIDES.

WITH the biography of Aben Ezra is closely connected that of his contemporary, RABBI MOSES BEN MAIMON, generally called, by the Jews, RAMBAM, (a word formed by the initials of the preceding designation,) and by the learned in general, MAIMONIDES. This distinguished person was born about the year 1139,* at Cordova, which at that time was subject, with a considerable portion of Spain, to the emperor of Morocco. His father was a learned Jew of that city, respectable, as well on account of his descent from learned ancestors, as for the office of judge, which he held with reputation. It is said that the birth of Moses was the occasion of his mother's death, and he was on that account not favorably regarded by his surviving parent. His deceased wife, the daughter of a butcher, was of a station in life very inferior to that of her husband, and, as soon after

* This statement is found at the end of his commentary on the Mishnah, in the Neapolitan edition of 1492." MENDELSSOHN'S Jerusalem, Vol. ii. p. 291. Lond. 1838.

her death, he married a woman of higher rank, it has been thought that the son of the former wife was considered by his father as a permanent reproach on him for having formed such a connection, and consequently regarded with aversion. Whether the judge was influenced by feelings so unworthy and unnatural, or not, is uncertain. The boy's dullness, however, notwithstanding all the efforts made to instruct him, either increased or produced the father's dislike. On occasion of some ill usage, the son left his parental home, and was probably received into some other Jewish family. After having devoted himself in Lucena to the study of the Talmud, and arrived at the age of manhood, he returned to Cordova, and, avoiding his father's house, made himself known to some of his friends. Through their influence, permission was granted him to deliver a discourse in the synagogue. While every one listened in astonishment to the youthful instructor, Rabbi Maimon, with no little surprise, recognized his own son, embraced him, and with parental affection welcomed him to his home. Under his father's guidance the young Moses continued to prosecute his rabbinical studies, but his acquaintance with Arabic, astronomy, mathematics and medicine, was formed in the school of the famous Averroes, with the learned Arabians Ebn Tophail and Ebn Saig as his companions.

It would be inconsistent with the intended

brevity of this notice, to enter into any biographical details of the life and character of Averroes, otherwise known by the title of Abdallah Mohammed Ebn Omar Ebn Roshd. The erudition and profound abilities which distinguished him, the dignities to which he was advanced, and the persecutions he was obliged to sustain in consequence of the charge of having abandoned the Moslem faith for natural religion, are matters of history to every reader.* In the inquisitive character of his mind, not sufficiently checked, it may be, by a right appreciation of the necessity of divine revelation to ascertain and establish religious truth, Maimonides most probably found a congeniality with his own. A freedom of thought, worthy of all praise when restrained within proper limits, marks the productions of this learned Jew. He felt the fetters of Rabbinism, and struggled to set himself free, not with the view of overturning the Jewish system, but in the hope of showing that its principles were in harmony with the soundest philosophy.

For this purpose he began, as early as the twenty-third year of his age, to prepare an exposition of the Mishna in the Arabic language, and completed it in seven years. The attempt made in this work to settle and explain the principles

* It has been said, that Maimonides himself abjured for a time his religion, and professed Mohammedanism. See Basnage, Book ix. chap. x. sect. 7.

of particular laws on the ground of reason, independently of the logomachies and appendages of the Gemara, and the author's known intimacy with Averroes, whose philosophical doctrines he had imbibed, were quite sufficient to subject him to the charge of heresy, and to oblige him to seek refuge in flight from the narrow, persecuting spirit of the times, aided as it probably then was, and as such a spirit has generally been, by personal or political considerations. Maimonides settled in Cairo, whence he derived the surname of the Egyptian, and there in the favor, and under the protection, of the celebrated Saladin, he prosecuted his various literary undertakings. Of these, the principal is his work on the Jewish law according to the Talmud, well known under the names of *Yad chazakah*, and *Mishneh Thorah*. The latter title describes it as a *repetition* of the law, a sort of Deuteronomy, and the former, meaning *strong hand*, was probably chosen to denote its supposed importance, and also the circumstance of its being comprehended within fourteen books,* the subdivisions of its four great parts. Untiring industry, united with profound knowledge of the subject, produced this work, which was hardly to

* WOLF thinks that this title is also in allusion to the last verse of Deuteronomy,—“In all that *strong hand*, which Moses showed.” The reader may compare also Isaiah viii. 11, where *strength of hand* is used for powerful divine impulse, producing important instruction. The two Hebrew letters of the word *Yad*, *hand*, denote 14.

have been expected from a man who had pursued a course so independent of Talmudic influence. The author had it in view to put an end to that superficial knowledge to which the weak poetic effusions of the times had given rise. Experience has shown, that, under the auspices of such helps true learning degenerates, as industry is neither excited nor exercised; and by the easy use of such assistance, each smatterer obtains a certain general view, which, either in his own eye, or of those of others, places him on a level with the thorough scholar. It was the intention of Maimonides, that every Jew acquainted with the Hebrew language, should know what Judaism commanded; and that he should be able to see the whole subject distinctly, not in the pale glimmer of jingling verses, but in the broad bright clearness of historical light and fundamental knowledge of principles and causes. After an unremitting attention of at least eight years, the great work was finished; and, as it soon became extensively known in the Jewish community, it raised the name of the Egyptian Moses to the highest celebrity.* The most distinguished scholars pro-

* "From Moses to Moses none arose like to Moses," became a sort of proverbial witticism among the Jews. A particular account of the *Yad* and its several editions, may be found in WOLF, Vol. i. pp. 840-855; iii. pp. 774-779. In 1832, HEMAN HEDWIG BERNARD published at Cambridge selections from it in Hebrew and English, with explanatory notes, and a glossary of particles and technical terms, with a view of exhibiting the creeds and ethics of the Jews,

posed questions to him for solution, and his opinions were generally regarded as decisive.

The YAD of the Moses, second only, in Jewish estimation, to his great namesake, abounds with passages which might be adduced in illustration of holy scripture, both as to sentiment and language. In his admirable treatise on the temper and dispositions, it would seem that the mind of the Jewish Rabbi occasionally rested on some of the beautiful parables of the heavenly Teacher himself, or on that simple yet touching language, which embodies the sacred and spiritual motives whereby his inspired followers urged conformity to the divine character. But it is well known that several of the earlier Jewish productions are replete with the soundest moral precepts, and with beautiful illustrations of religious truth, intermingled, it is true, with much of imperfection and error, and certainly by no means free from absurdity, which occasionally becomes ridiculous. But what Christian can fail to recognize the true spiritual import of the law of Moses in the sentiments that follow? "We are commanded to walk in the way of the good and of the righteous, for it is said, *and thou shalt walk in his ways.*" (Deut. xxviii. 9.) "Thus they" (meaning the ancients,) "have taught, by way of explaining this commandment : *as He is called gracious, so be*

8vo. The student will find this work very useful in facilitating the acquisition of Rabbinical Hebrew.

thou also gracious ; as He is called merciful, so be thou also merciful ; as He is called holy, so be thou also holy."* How strikingly in accordance with the language of the Saviour : "*Be ye therefore perfect, be ye therefore merciful, even as your Father in heaven is perfect, is merciful ;*" and with that of his apostle, "*As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*"†

The ancient advocates, whether Christian or Jewish, of an earthly and carnal millennium, might have learned to correct their fond conceit, if they had adopted the truer principle of exposition, developed briefly, but clearly, in the writings of Maimonides. He discards the literal interpretation of several texts, which, both in ancient and modern times, have been supposed to favor the error ; and maintains, in harmony with the figurative style which characterizes the prophetic writing, and also in accordance with the exposition of some of the earlier Rabbins, the more elevated meaning of a future state of happiness in the heavenly kingdom of the Messiah. I quote one of several passages, as it illustrates the intermingling of the important and the trifling, which so frequently marks the character of Jewish productions. "With regard to the intermediate man," (that is, the person whose good and evil deeds

* Precepts relating to the Temper, chap. i. sect. 10. pp. 155, 156. Bernard's Translation.

† Matt. v. 48. Luke vi. 36. 1 Peter i. 15.

are equally balanced,) “if, among that half, (of his actions,) which includes his sins, the sin also of never having put on the phylacteries be found, judgment is pronounced on him according to his sin ; but still he has a share in the world to come. Even [on all the wicked, though their sins be numerous, judgment is pronounced according to their sins, but yet they have a share in the world that is to come. For all Israel have a share in the world that is to come, although they have sinned, for it is said, *thy people also shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever.** Here *land* is a figure meaning *the land of life*, which is *the world that is to come*. Also the pious of other nations have a share in the world that is to come.”† To the same purpose the Mishna, as quoted by the same authority : “All Israel have a share in the world that is to come, for it is said, *thy people shall be all righteous, they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified.*” That the author has in view a future state is undeniable, as, in the same chapter, he repeatedly refers to those of whom he is speaking as having *died*, and especially in the 24th section, where he speaks of the sinner *dying* a penitent, *repenting at the end*, and consequently having a share in the world to come.

* Isaiah, lx. 21.

† Precepts relating to Repentance, chap. iii. sect. 11. pp. 239, 240. Bernard.

On the other hand, it is melancholy to be obliged to note the author's inflexible adherence to the fundamental error, which maintains the absolute unchangeableness and perpetuity of the Mosaic system, and the obligation of cutting off the man, who would venture to represent it as abolished. I cite a few passages. "If a prophet were to arise and perform great signs or wonders, but sought to deny the prophecy of Moses our master, we must not hearken to him, but should know with certainty that the signs were performed by enchantment or witchcraft."* It is clear and manifest, that the law is a commandment which is to last forever and ever, and which does not admit of any alteration, diminution, or addition. For it is said, "what thing soever I command you, observe to do it: *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.*"† Again it is said, "those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children *forever*, that we may do all the words of this law."‡ This teaches us that we are commanded to perform all the requirements of the law *forever*. And so also it is said, an ordinance *forever* in your generations. No prophet is allowed henceforth to introduce any innovation. Should, therefore, any man arise, either from among the nations or from among Israel, and perform any sign or wonder, and declare that the Lord has

* Foundations of the Law, chap. viii. sect. 7. p. 125.

† Deut. xii. 32.

‡ Deut. xxix. 29.

sent him to add any commandment, or to diminish any commandment, or to explain any of the commandments in such a way as we have not heard from Moses; or if he were to say that the commandments, which have been enjoined upon the Israelites, are not to last forever, but were only temporary commandments; then, behold, that man is a *false prophet*, for he came to deny the prophecy of Moses; and so he is to be destroyed by strangulation, because he has dealt proudly in thus speaking in the name of the Lord things which He has not commanded him; for He, blessed be his name, enjoined Moses, that his commandment should be unto us and to our children *forever*, and God is not a man that he should lie.”* He afterwards allows that a prophet may dispense with the obligation of a divine law for a time, in order to obtain some important result; “but if he say that the thing is to be broken forever, he must be destroyed by strangulation; for the law says, unto us and our children *forever*.”† He lays down the same principle in another part of his work, although he limits its application to all classes of Israelites. “He who says that the Creator has commuted one commandment for another, and thus this law is abolished, although it was originally from the Lord, is an Israelite who denies the law.”‡

* Ib. chap. vi. sect. 1, 2, pp. 127-30. † Ib. p. 134.

‡ Precepts relating to Repentance, chap. iii. sect. 15. p. 243.

It must be obvious, that so long as this is regarded as a fundamental principle of Judaism, it is idle to expect that the Israelites can be induced to renounce their law, and to embrace the gospel as the only way of salvation. "The veil is upon their heart," and they cannot "steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished."*

Notwithstanding his plain reference to a future state of happiness to be enjoyed in the heavenly kingdom, Maimonides lays down certain marks to enable his brethren to judge of the claims of an avowed Messiah, which are founded on misapprehensions of the spiritual nature of his kingdom, and on the presumption that he is to be a secular prince, a great warrior in the ordinary sense of the word, and a king reigning and judging in the literal Jerusalem. "Do not suppose," says he, "that it is needful that the king Messiah should perform either signs or wonders, (such as inverting the order of nature, or resuscitating the dead, or other miraculous deeds,) according to the opinion which fools entertain of him. Such is not the case, for, behold, Rabbi Akibah was a great sage, and one of the wise men of the Mishna, and he became armor bearer to Ben Chosibah the king, whom he declared to be the Messiah. And not only Akibah, but all the wise men of that age, considered Ben Chosibah to be the king Messiah, until for his sins he was slain; when his death con-

* 2 Cor. iii. 15, 13.

vinced them that they were mistaken in his character. But the sages did not require of him either token or wonder.

The fundamental principles of this matter are as follows: This law which has been to us through Moses our teacher, (peace be with him,) together with its statutes and enactments, is immutable, and is in force forever and until the end of time; nothing is to be added thereto, nor must aught be diminished therefrom. And whoever does either add, or diminish or pervert the interpretation of the law, or assign a mystical or allegorical sense to the commandments contrary to their plain and obvious meaning; such an one is decidedly a liar, an evil doer and an infidel, (Epicurean.) Should a king arise of the house of David, who observes the law and performs the commandments, as did David his progenitor, according to the oral and the written law, who obliges all his people in Israel to be steadfast in their obedience to the divine precepts, and to repair any infraction therein, and fight *the battles of the Lord*, he may be considered as intended to be Messiah the king. If he prospers in his undertakings, *is victorious over all surrounding nations*, rebuilds the temple in its appointed place, and gathers the dispersed exiles of the house of Israel there, it is decided that he is the true Messiah. But should he not prove successful to that extent, *or should be slain, it is then evident that he*

is not the Messiah predicted and promised in holy writ, but he is like all those other just and pious kings of the house of David who are deceased."*

It is hardly necessary to remark, that all this is gratuitous assertion, founded on a partial view of prophecy, and a literal and verbal exposition. The tendency of such views is obviously to call off the mind from that spiritual and religious appreciation of Christ's kingdom which Christianity developes, and to sanction and establish a desire after secular and political power.

A few years after the completion of the *Yad chazakah*, Maimonides composed in Arabic his *Delalith al Hairin*, known by the Hebrew title of *More hannevochim*, Guide of the Perplexed. We see, in this publication, not the Talmudic Jew, but the philosophical inquirer, who felt the necessity of infusing soul into the then lifeless body of Judaism; of abandoning the wretched system of retailing Rabbinical opinions, whereby the prevalent method of instruction burdened the memory, and blunted the intellect; and of elevating the Jewish mind to the exercise of its own reason and reflection on the divinely revealed contents of the scriptures. In this work he declined the use of the Hebrew language, partly because he wished to avoid giving direct offence to the prejudices of a large proportion of his nation,

* Maimonides, as quoted in the Hebrew Review, vol. ii. p. 367, Lond. 1835, from the *Yad*. vol. iv. Book xiv. chap. 71.

and partly because he could with the greater facility express his philosophical views in the Arabic. The design of this book is to develop the spiritual character of the revelation made through Moses, and to show how its difficulties may be removed, and its seeming contradictions accommodated by the calm illumination of the holy scriptures, without the aid of Rabbinical tradition and fables. In a letter addressed to his son, the author declares that he did not write his work in order to promote his own reputation, his advanced age having taught him to estimate lightly such honor; but rather as a useful recreation, and in order to set at rest various doubts. In publishing it to the world, he was governed by the consideration, that he had a religious duty to perform, growing out of the prevailing ignorance of the Jews, and in the hope that some, at least, might derive instruction from its pages, although many a fool would cast it aside as useless, or, on account of the confusion of his own mind, regard it as unintelligible.

The More Nevochim soon found an honorable distinction in the south of France. In Marseilles, a Spanish Rabbi, named Judah Ben Solomon, undertook a translation of it into Hebrew, but was not very successful, owing somewhat to the incorrectness of his copy. The work was performed much more correctly by another Spanish Jew, Rabbi Samuel Ben Judah Ebn Tibbon, at the

instance of the most respectable Rabbins of Provence. This excellent translator, whose father was already well known for his translations of many Arabic writings, regarded it as his first duty to open a correspondence with the author, and to send him some portions of his version, requesting him, at the same time, to explain obscurities, and correct the errors which had crept into the copies through the carelessness of transcribers. It is hardly necessary to add, that courteous and satisfactory replies were sent without hesitation. Maimonides speaks in very favorable terms of the character of the translation : but it must be regretted that it was only in part subjected to his supervision. An opportunity of examining the entire work would, in all probability, have resulted in a closer approximation to the pure Hebrew idiom, and a removal of those traces of the original language, which at present are but too conspicuous.

While the pupils and friends of Maimonides estimated his work too highly to allow it to remain concealed in a language not generally understood, the bigoted adherents of Rabbinism, who had become acquainted with its character, renewed the cry of heresy that burst out from that very province which procured the translation of his book. The *More Nevochim* was publicly burned ; the author and his adherents, comprehending all who dared to read this or other philosophical works written by Greeks or Arabians, subjected to the

ban ; and, for forty years, the Rabbinical world was torn to pieces by internal commotions and logomachies. The gifted author did not live to witness the confusion of which he had been the indirect occasion. He died at Cairo, at the age of seventy-five, generally beloved and lamented, not, however, without expressing his apprehension to his son of the storm of persecution that was arising.

The *More Nevochim* is in three parts. An account of it in detail may be found in *WOLF*, Vol. I. pp. 855--859 ; III. 779--785 ; and IV. 917, 918. The younger Buxtorf translated the work into Latin, beginning his task at the age of twenty-five years. He is highly commended by his father for his perspicuity in eliciting the meaning of his author. *WOLF*, in his third volume, speaks of a Latin version prior to that of Buxtorf, and gives a specimen of both.

The remains of Maimonides were interred at Tiberias. Some French Jews, travelling in Palestine, effaced, it is said, the honorable inscription on his tomb, which distinguished him as "the choice one among men," and substituted in its place one of the very opposite character, "the excommunicated and the heretic:" a striking comment on the extravagance of ignorance and fanaticism.

This sketch will be suitably concluded by a short notice of the active and useful manner, in

which the last years of this remarkable man were employed. It is drawn originally from his letter to Rabbi Samuel, the translator of his work. In reference to a suggestion made by this person of his inclination to visit the author of the *More*, and to converse with him on the topics of his book, Maimonides, while he expresses the great satisfaction which he would derive from a visit from his friend, frankly acknowledges that his engagements are so unremitted, as to deprive him of the pleasure of much intercourse and conversation. The duties which his station required him to discharge, were oppressive and injurious to his health. He was compelled to visit the palace daily, and to attend to the medical wants of the royal occupant, and of his children and women. On returning to his residence, so many sick persons were in waiting, for all of whom he was obliged to prescribe, that he had not time enough to take his meals. Religious topics were necessarily confined to the Sabbath, when he was occupied by members of the congregation. It is not to be doubted that on this day he was called on to expound various topics of the Jewish law, and to solve such difficulties as were thought to surpass the ability of ordinary minds.

DAVID KIMCHI.

AMONG the most distinguished defenders of Maimonides, the name of RABBI DAVID KIMCHI, who is known by the abbreviated term RADDAK, is conspicuous. He lived at a period when the difficulties were at the greatest height, the latter part of the twelfth century and beginning of the thirteenth, and died, it is said, in Provence in the year 1240. Several writers speak of him as a native of Narbonne, but Bartolocci asserts, without hesitation, that the country which gave him birth is entirely unknown. He states that the author of the Shalsheth hakkaballa, that is, chain of tradition, speaks of Kimchi's being in Narbonne in the year of the Christian era, 1192; but this determines nothing respecting the place of his birth. Many of his works, whether in print or manuscript, introduce him as David Kimchi of Spain, (the *Sephardi*;) in which country the family was long distinguished for supplying rulers of synagogues and rectors of schools, both in Arragon

and Castile.* Wolf supposes him to have been a Spaniard by birth, and to have resided in France.† His father, Joseph Kimchi, was distinguished for scholarship, although inferior to both his sons, David and Moses. The former, as is well known, ranks at the head of the list of Jewish grammarians, and is certainly entitled to preference over all his predecessors. Uniting the study of philosophy with that of Hebrew grammar, he could hardly fail to incline to the side of Maimonides, although properly speaking, he did not strictly attach himself to either party, and regarded the whole quarrel as silly and absurd. To such an extravagant degree had the controversy extended, and so mischievous in its influence on domestic relations was the ban which the hostile Rabbies had denounced against whole congregations, that a general inclination was felt to bring about an accommodation, and David Kimchi was gladly received as a mediator. For a long time he negotiated successfully with the most considerable of the French congregations, and was at length invested with full powers to effect a pacification, and if possible to put an end to the controversy.

With this benevolent object in view, and provided with the necessary papers, he undertook a journey from Narbonne to Toledo, the residence of Rabbi Judah Ben Joseph Alphachar, who had

* Bart. part ii. pp. 25, 26.

† Vol. I, p. 299.

taken a very prominent part in the opposition to Maimonides. His intention to have a personal interview with this zealot for Rabbinism, on the subject of the charges brought against that celebrated author, was unhappily frustrated by a severe attack of fever, which prevented him from pursuing his journey, and confined him to his bed at Avila. In order that the efforts which he had already made might not be altogether unavailing, he committed the papers to his travelling companion and nephew, Joseph, and sent him with a brief letter, stating the cause of his inability to visit Rabbi Judah, and entreating him, after a perusal of the transmitted papers should have put him in possession of the views of the most distinguished Rabbies, to exercise his authority in terminating the disgraceful contest, by laying under the ban its principal promoters, Rabbi Solomon, head of the congregation of Montpellier, and his adherents.

The reply of Alphachar, which was written in rhyme, according to the tasteless fashion of the age, and a considerable time after the receipt of Kimchi's letter, was in the highest degree contemptuous, and indirectly calumniated him and his coadjutors, as persons who had fallen away from religion and become despisers of the law. The mild and sensible rejoinder of the French Rabbi produced a still more contemptuous and extravagant letter from his Spanish correspondent. He ridicules the troublesome journey which Kim-

chi had undertaken in order to effect a reconciliation, by an allusion evidently intended to be witty, to Satan's "going to and fro in the earth," as mentioned in the book of Job ; speaks of "the guide of the perplexed" as himself walking in darkness and wandering in the wilderness ; accuses him of wishing to reconcile the views of the Bible with the natural philosophy of the Greeks ; "but," says he, accommodating, as is his custom throughout the letter, the language of scripture to his subject, "the Hebrew women are not as the Egyptian women ; the one (doctrine) saith, nay, but my son is the living, and thy son is the dead." He concludes his epistle by acknowledging the great value of the former work of Maimonides, and confines his censures to the More Nevochim, at the same time advising Rabbi David to depart from the evil way, and to return to the true faith.

Kimchi began his letters to Judah with clauses taken from verses of the Bible ; for instance, "thou art Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee:" the verb *praise*, as the Hebrew reader well knows, being an alliteration with the name *Judah*. The discourteous correspondent introduces his reply in the language of Zachariah, "the Lord rebuke thee, Satan, or adversary."* This letter was never received, possibly because the writer on more mature deliberation was induced to withhold it, but more probably on account of the re-

* Bart. ubi sup. p. 29.

moval of Kimchi to another place. That he was acquainted with the introductory allusion to Satan or adversary, is clear from a third letter which he addressed to his prejudiced and impetuous correspondent, in which he expostulates with him on the mortifying allusions in which he had indulged, and points out the danger to which the Jewish community was exposed from the Christians, in consequence of having called in their aid in suppressing the philosophical works of Maimonides. Another communication from Rabbi Judah closes the correspondence. He defends his former letters, and also his own conduct and that of Rabbi Solomon, and ends by declaring that this is the last word that he will waste on the subject.

The dissensions which the publication of the *More Nevochim* occasioned still, however, continued, until, after much discussion and controversy, both parties recalled their respective acts of excommunication, and peace was at last established. But the reconciliation was by no means cordial. The flame of contention was not extinguished ; it was only smothered, and in the next generation burst out again with open violence.

Kimchi is one of the most distinguished of the Jewish writers, and has been extravagantly eulogized by his nation.* An account of his most important works is given by Wolf, in Vol. I. pp. 299

* As the word meaning *meal* was figuratively used for the law,

-310, III. 188-195, and IV. 806-808, and also in the Biog. Univ. Tome xxii. pp. 419, 420, and Bartolucci, part II. pp. 30-34. The most important are his Hebrew Grammar, which he entitled *Michlol*, perfection, his Lexicon, or Book of Roots, *Sepher Shorashim*,* and his commentaries, in which he shows himself to be a careful and literal interpreter, too much given, it has been said, to grammatical niceties, and therefore somewhat tedious, but in a great degree free from those trifles and superstitions which abound in the writings of the Jewish Rabbies. According to some authors, he commented on the whole Bible, but Bartolucci speaks of his having written on the Pentateuch as doubtful. He had never been able to discover a copy.†

and as, with the addition of a Yod, it forms the family name of our author, his admirers played upon the term in the proverb, no meal without Kimchi (miller).

* Bartolucci and Wolf consider these two productions as different parts of the same general work.

† Ubi sup. p. 30.

ABARBANEL.

DON ISAAC ABARBANEL, the son of Don Judah, was born in Lisbon, in 1437. He was of Spanish extraction,* the family having originally fled from Spain to avoid one of the persecutions which so often harrassed the Jews of that country. His education was suitable to the distinction and wealth of his father, and his abilities and acquirements procured for him the admiration of his own and subsequent ages. He was in high estimation with Alphonso, who admitted him to the honor of being one of his privy counsellors, a mark of confidence, of which the influential Jew showed himself to be worthy. He was also minister of finance both in Spain and in Portugal. The death of this monarch, however, put an end to his dignity. Don Juan II., bent upon oppressing the nobility and elevating the royal power, introduced important changes into the administration, which produced dangerous commotions among

* The family of Abarbanel was one of opulence and distinction. Some indeed, have not scrupled to derive his origin from David, but this appears altogether idle and unfounded. See Wolf, Vol. 1. p. 628.

the grandees. Abarbanel, who was probably implicated in the measures of the Duke of Braganza, although he had withdrawn from public affairs, was suddenly summoned to the king's presence. He was on his way thither, when he received timely notice that his obedience would probably cost him his life. Immediately he returned, and collecting his family and most valuable effects, he fled to Castile, where he spent some time in literary pursuits, and wrote his annotations on the prophets. He was much respected by the Jews there, and soon acquired the confidence of Ferdinand and Isabella, doubtless by some disclosures which he made of the relations of Portugal.

Abarbanel availed himself of the favorable regard of the royal pair, with the view of benefiting his Jewish brethren. But his efforts were unsuccessful. Scarcely had he heard of the edict banishing the Jews from Spain, than he threw himself at the feet of the sovereigns, laid before them the misery and deplorable consequences which such a measure would necessarily produce, and offered them immense sums to enable them to carry on their wars with the Moors, on condition of recalling the ruinous decision. His earnestness made a strong impression on the royal minds. But the effect of his eloquent representations, and the hope of the Jews, were frustrated by the entrance of the grand inquisitor Torquemada, with a crucifix in his hand. "Judas," said he to the

sovereigns, "sold his master for thirty pieces of silver; your highnesses are willing to sell him again for 30,000 pieces of gold. Here he is, take him and dispose of him quickly."

On the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, Abarbanel retired to Naples, and shortly afterwards he went to Messina. The invasion of Charles VIII, who took Naples in the same month, was in all probability unexpected by him, as he had left his family in that city. He afterwards proceeded to Corfu, where he had the satisfaction of recovering his commentary on the Pentateuch, composed at Lisbon, the manuscript of which had been stolen from him. This work he enlarged, and completed it in the following year at Minopolis, where he lived with his family. During his residence at that place, he composed a number of learned works. His exposition of Daniel is said to be particularly worthy of notice, in a historical point of view, and also on account of the hope expressed in it of the advent of the Messiah within 70 years at farthest. If the author could have been chagrined at a foresight of the failure of his expectation, and at the same time have anticipated the predictions of numerous commentators subsequently to his own age, he might have consoled himself by the consideration, that in committing a palpable error on this point, he was only one of a multitude of prophets, who felt a brotherly sympathy in his mortification.

In after life Abarbanel settled in Venice, where he maintained no slight degree of influence with the senate. He died there in 1508, at the age of 71 years, and was buried at Padua.

Abarbanel is well known as an able commentator, although tedious from the immense number of questions which he is constantly proposing, to which he returns correspondent answers. He was a keen and sarcastic opponent of the Christians,* and his commentaries, particularly those on the later prophets, abound with attacks on Christ and his Church. His hostility is not to be wondered at, as his views must have been founded on the wretched abuses of our holy religion by which he was surrounded, and which exercised so impolitic and flagitious an influence on the persons and property of his nation. Some notice of his various commentaries and other works may be seen in the *Biographie Universelle*, Tom. I. p. 102, 103, in Wolf, Vol. I. p. 628-640, III 540-544 and VI. 876, 877, and in Bartolucci, part. iii. p. 876-884.

* Thus, for example, he interprets Isa. v. 8, of the monks and priests, who appropriated estates to themselves, and verse 11, of their luxurious banquets in their monasteries. At times, it is hardly to be supposed that he is serious, as where he explains v. 13 of the bell ropes. These instances are given by Gesenius in his *Introduction to Isaiah*, § 17, note 76., Vol i. p. 126. Abarbanel is described by Bartolucci, part iii. p. 875-6, as a most indefatigable student and remarkably ready writer, but an interpreter not to be relied on, a bitter enemy to Christians, writing execrations against them at the very time that he was paying court to their princes.

SAADIAS, THE GAON.

RABBI SAADIAS BEN JOSEPH, was born in Fayoum* in Egypt in the year 892. He is generally distinguished by the term Gaon with the article prefixed, the or hag-gaon. This is a title of honor, equivalent to *the illustrious*, by which, in that period the learned heads of Jewish schools were designated. It is applied by Aben Ezra and others to Saadias by way of distinction, on account of his extraordinary merit. The rectorship of the school in Sora near Babylon becoming vacant, the Resh Gelutha,† that is the prince or president of the Jews in that country, David Ben Zaccai, could not immediately determine whom he would appoint to fill this station. Two persons of distinction and character seemed to possess nearly equal claims to the office in question. Zemach Ben Sahen was a descendant of a learned line of progenitors in Sora ; Saadias, the Egyptian, had acquired an established reputation for his extensive

* Called also Al Fimiu and Pethom.

† Head of the Captivity.

learning and excellent character. But he was a bold and unyielding man. The Resh Gelutha, unable to decide between the two, offered the dignity to a certain Nassi, to whom he was greatly indebted for assisting him in obtaining the presidency. It was declined, however, on the ground, acknowledged with a candor equally laudable and uncommon, of inability to perform the duties of so important a place. Motives of policy led to the appointment of Saadias ; for although David regarded him with unfriendly feelings, he advanced him to the vacant dignity, in the hope, if a quarrel should break out, of being able to displace him the more easily on account of his being a foreigner. The anticipated difficulty was not long in occurring. Its cause is unknown, but it needed nothing more than a trifle to enkindle the flame of discord between a rich man ambitious of power, and a scholar conspicuous for his talents and conscious of superiority. So powerful, both among the wealthy and the learned, was the party of the Gaon, that all the efforts of his opponent to remove him from his office were unsuccessful. Several circumstances occurred to widen the breach, all of which however, while they showed the tenacity with which Rabbi Saadias adhered to his own opinions, showed no less his firmness in maintaining what was right and resisting oppression. Each party endeavored to excite the people against the other by resorting to excom-

munication. After the lapse of seven years of disgraceful dissension, a mutual reconciliation took place, and the Resh Gelutha partook of an entertainment in the house of the Gaon, which of the two should have the privilege of acting as host to the other having been before decided by lot. Nothing occurred subsequently to this event to destroy the harmony of the parties, and about eight years afterwards, in the year 941 or 942, at the age of 50, Rabbi Saadias died.

This distinguished Jew was a Talmudist, and maintained the Jewish doctrine of oral tradition. On this subject a dispute is said to have taken place between him and a certain Rabbi Shalmon, a Karaite, who had been his teacher, in the course of which, Saadias adduced seven arguments in defence of his view, all of which, however, were refuted by his opponent.* But although the Gaon defended the traditionary system of the leading sect of the Jews, yet, as he studied under the directions of a Karaite, his views must have been formed under somewhat counteracting influences, which would naturally lead to a deeper investigation than is discoverable in ordinary Rabbinical writings. The tendency of extremes to produce each other may also account for his rejection of all mystical expositions, and his endeavour to

* *Miscellaneous Discourses relating to the Traditions and Usages of the Scribes and Pharisees in our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ's time*, by W. WORTON, D. D. London, 1718. Vol. i. p. 75 ss.

clear up what is inexplicable, by indirect and circuitous methods of interpretation. He left behind him several valuable works, the most important of which is his translation of the Bible into Arabic. The Pentateuch, which was originally printed at Constantinople in 1546, has been introduced in the Paris and London Polyglotts; Isaiah was published by Paulus from manuscripts of the Bodleian library and that of Pococke, with prefaces and notes at Jena, 1790, 1791, 2 vols. 8vo. He is the author also of an exposition of the Canticles and Daniel, both in Hebrew. His *Sepher haemunah*, discourse on the faith, composed in Arabic and translated into Hebrew by Judah Ben Samuel Aben Tibbon, is a violent attack on the Christian religion in ten parts. Some account of these and the other productions of this Rabbi may be found in Bartolocci, Part. iv. p. 267, 268; also in Wolf, vol. i. p. 933-936, iii. 859-862, iv. 936, and in the Biographie Universelle, Tome xxxix. p. 404, 405.

SPECIMENS OF JEWISH
COMMENTARY.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI SOLOMON
JARCHI,
ON ISAIAH, CHAP. XI.

1. BUT there shall come forth a rod from the trunk of Jesse : And if you should say, behold, (these are) consolations for Hezekiah and his people, (assuring them) that they shall not fall into his hand ;* but what shall become of the captivity which was carried captive to Chalah and Chabor ? has their hope perished ? It has not wholly perished, for king Messiah will come, and redeem them.—A rod ; a royal sceptre : and a branch ; it means, a sucker of a tree ; and a branch shall sprout forth from his roots. And the whole subject of this prophecy, and (what is said) at the conclusion of it—and it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall raise† his hand a second

* He means, if it should be said that the consoling representations in the former chapter are only assurances to Hezekiah and the people of Judah, that they should not be subjected to the power of Sennacherib, king of Assyria, and have no reference to the Israelites, who had been removed from their native country.

† Literally, add.

time—behold it is announced for the consolation of those who had been taken captive by the Assyrians.

3. וְהָרִיחֵו בִּירְאָת יי'. Shall fill (him with) the spirit of the fear of the Lord: in French, je ranimerai lui.*—He shall not judge according to the sight of his eyes: for through the wisdom of the holy one, blessed be he, (which is) within him,† he shall know and understand who is just and who is guilty.

4. בְּמִישׁוֹר (Eng. tr. with equity :) The word (expresses) ease and tenderness.‡—And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth: according to the Targum; and he shall strike the guilty of the earth.—And with the breath of his lips: and with the discourse of his lips.

5. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins: and righteous persons shall surround him, adhering to him like a girdle.

* The printed text in Buxtorf's Bible, and in the Bomberg edition is ^{//} ^{//} אִירֹאנֶמֶר לְיִי for which Breithaupt gives in his translation *erounemer*, and in a note *airounemer*, both of which are unintelligible. He thinks that the original is undoubtedly corrupted. This is probably the case. Hochstädter, in his edition of Isaiah, with the commentaries of Kimchi, Aben Ezra, and others, reads ^{//} אִירֹאנֶמֶר, and, supposing the first part of the word to indicate the future tense, gives the French which I have introduced in the text. Still there appears no reason why Jarchi should have employed the first person.

† Lit. in the midst of him.

‡ Analogous to the English use of smoothness, softness.

6. And the fatling : the fatted ox.

8. וְשַׁעֲשַׁע And shall sport.—On the hole of the asp : on the hole of the ground in the midst of which the serpent makes his habitation, (nest ;) in French, grotte. אֲסַפִּי (asp, denotes) a serpent, which, on becoming* old, grows deaf, and is called *pathen*, and is incapable of being charmed : as it is said, which will not hearken to the voice of charmers.†—And upon the den (מְאֹרֶת, cave, hole,) of the basilisk. Jonathan ‡ explains (it) of the appearance of the round balls (pupils) of the eye of the basilisk serpent ; but Menachem§ interprets it (by) cavern and dusty hole. And thus (we have) אֲוֵר of the Chaldees ; and thus בְּאֹרִים glorify ye the Lord.||—גְּמֹרֶל, a boy who is weaned from his mother's breasts.—הִדְהֵה, Shall put his hand. Jonathan explains (it thus :) shall stretch out his hand ; like הִדְהֵה, the sounding again (echo,)

* Literally, from that it becomes.

† Ps. lviii. 6. The pathen is the species of serpent spoken of.

‡ The author of the Chaldee Targum of the Prophets.

§ Some one of the old Rabbies. Wolf mentions thirty-seven of the name, vol. i. pp. 762-778, and iii pp. 684-703.

|| It is hardly necessary to suggest to the reader, that this is only a fancy, drawn from a similarity in the words. The first citation from Gen. xi. 31, refers to the name of a place, *Ur*, and the term employed in the other, Isa. xxiv. 15, means *fires*. In the latter passage, Jarchi seems to have understood it of the Urim, and the whole quotation to mean, honor the Lord by Urim. The analogy lies simply in this point, that the words imply the idea of the communication of light.

of the mountains,* and like *הָדִיר*, which denotes elevation of the voice, this (word) also expresses elevation. But the he final, (which) enters into, (that is, belongs to,) this word as radical, falls away, like *קִנָּה, בָּנָה, עָשָׂה*.

9. *יָדַעַת אֵת יְיָ*, to know the Lord.

10. For an ensign (a standard) of the people : that the people may raise a standard in order to be collected to it.

11. A second time : as he acquired (delivered) them from Egypt, which deliverance of theirs was complete, without servitude ;† but the deliverance of the second house was not of the (that) number,‡ for behold they were subjected to Cyrus. And from the islands (or coasts) of the sea. These are the islands (or coasts,) of Chittim, Javanim.§

12. And he will set up a standard : in French, *perche* ; and it will be a sign to collect to it, (or, to him, that is, God,) and to bring the captivity of Israel (as) a present to him.

13. Ephraim shalt not envy Judah : Messiah, the son of Joseph, and Messiah, the son of Judah, will not envy each other.

* Ezek. vii. 7.

† Lit., pure, so that they should not serve.

‡ That denoted by the phrase, a second time. The reason is that it was incomplete, inasmuch as they continued in subjection to the Persian Government.

§ Or, according to the reading in the Bomberg Bible, Chittim, Romans, sons of Esau.

14. But they will fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines towards the west. Israel will fly and run with one shoulder* against the Philistines who (live) in the west of the land of Israel, and will subdue their land: like in the way they murder by consent,† (שִׁכְמָה, equivalent to) one shoulder. And thus Jonathan explains it: and they shall associate themselves one shoulder to smite the Philistines who are in the west.—And the children of Ammon (will be) their obedience; according to the Targum, will obey them, receiving their commands to them.

15. And (the Lord) shall utterly destroy: to dry it, (that is, the sea,) in order that the captives of Israel may pass over by it from Egypt.—Over the river: the river Euphrates, that the captivity in Assyria might pass over by it.—With his mighty wind: As there is nothing like this in scripture,‡ the subject suggests the meaning to be,§ by his strong wind.—In seven streams: in seven divisions, that the seven captivities|| above mentioned, might pass over by it, (those namely) from Assyria, and from Egypt, and so forth; the islands of the sea not being comprehended within

* That is, unanimously. Compare the English phrase, shoulder to shoulder.

† Hosea vi. 9.

‡ That is, as the word עִיִּים never elsewhere occurs.

§ Lit., the thing is explained (thus.)

|| He means the captives in the seven countries before spoken of.

the enumeration.*—And make go: (that is,) through the midst of it, the captives.—בַּנְעָלִים. With sandals, (in other words,) on dry ground.

16. And there shall be a highway: in the midst of the waters for the remnant of his people.

* Lit., “and from the isles of the sea” is not of this class.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI DAVID KIMCHI, ON ISAIAH XI.

1. BUT there shall come forth a rod. This section, which relates to the future, the time of the Messiah, is connected with (the subject of) the tranquillity which prevailed in the days of Hezekiah. He says, (that is, the prophet,) you should not be astonished on account of a great wonder, such as that which was done in the days of Hezekiah, in the destruction of the camp of the Assyrians in a moment; for a still greater wonder, than this shall be done for Israel in the time of the Messiah, that which will take place for Israel in the gathering together of the captivity. And this one will be of the family of king Hezekiah; and he mentions Jesse, because from him the first king proceeded. The meaning of **הטר** is rod, as in the Targums,* (or, in Chaldee.)

* In Num. xvii. 8, 9, **מטה** is four times rendered by Onkelos **הטר**.

And he says, from the trunk, from his roots ; because the tree which is cut down will sprout again, and produce branches from its trunk and roots. **גִּזְע**, trunk, denotes what is left of the tree above the ground, from the sides of which the branches will grow. And so from the roots which are under the ground, they will sprout forth in like manner. And because Israel have been gone into captivity from their land this great number of years, and their kingdom has ceased, like the felled tree whose trunk and roots are (still) left ; he says that there is still hope that the trunk will sprout again. And the prophet says, that from the roots of Jesse and from his trunk shall yet come forth a rod, a branch, and there shall yet be a king over Israel as formerly, and they shall be greater than ever.*

2. And he says : And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him ; for all this shall be from the Lord. At first he says the Spirit of the Lord, and afterwards he explains (it by) the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.—And learning, (**דַּכְמָה**), that is, whatever† man may teach us, so that we shall know (it,) and it shall be ready (for use) at any time ; and understanding, (**בִּינָה**), is man's intelligence in (reference to) what he has not learned,

* Lit., shall exceed that which they were.

† Lit., the thing which.

(resulting) from what he has learned.*—And counsel: this is knowledge and exercise in subjects relating to morals and the manners of men† with each other.—And knowledge and the fear of the Lord: both of these words are in construct with *the Lord*. He means to say that he will know the Lord and fear him.

3. And shall make him of quick scent in the fear of the Lord. Because the smelling is a delicate sense, he denotes a delicate matter by this sense. And thus (we have,) he smelleth the battle afar off—as a thread of tow is broken when it smelleth the fire.‡ And so he says, and shall make him of quick scent in the fear of the Lord: that is to say, with (but) little (exercise) of his intelligence, he will be able to perceive (properly to understand and appreciate,) men both good and bad, neither will it be necessary for him to see with the eyes and to hear with the ears, in order to judge the children of men and to pass equitable sentence on them; for, by his knowledge and understanding he will be acquainted with their works, with (the exercise of but) little intelligence. And my respected father, whose memory be blessed, explains רַחֲרִיחַ by—and his discourse—meaning the breath of his mouth; and

* In other words, the former is acquired knowledge, and the latter natural understanding strengthened by use.

† Lit., children of the world.

‡ Job xxxix. 25, and Judges xvi. 9. In these two passages the original word for *smelleth* is the same as that in the text of Isaiah.

thus (we have), at my breathing, at my cry :* he means, that his discourse will be continually in the fear of the Lord.

4. But with righteousness will he judge : He mentions the poor and meek of the earth. And although he will judge all men with uprightness, (both) poor and rich ; yet, as the way of the world is to favor the great and the rich, he says, that he will not do so, but with righteousness he will take away the judgment (or cause) of the poor from the rich, and he will reprove, (or, pass sentence on,) the strong with equity on account of the meek of the earth, so that they shall not plunder nor oppress them because they are weak and feeble. The Lamed in לַעֲנִי אֶרֶץ is put for, on account of, as it is also in, say for me (לִי) he is my brother,† and in other similar places. And he will smite the earth with the rod of his mouth : He means the wicked of the earth. And inasmuch as he mentions the meek of the earth, it is because they are of an opposite character : he places them in juxta-position‡ in order to make (his meaning) the more intelligible. The end of the verse proves (this to be the correct exposition,) which says, will slay the wicked. And indeed, without an ellipsis, the meaning may be understood (to be), that he will smite the sons of the

* Lam. iii. 56. The word rendered *breathing*, is from the same root as that in the text.

† Gen. xx. 13.

‡ Lit., puts near.

earth, whomsoever it may be right to smite : for behold he had said, and he will reprove (or pass sentence,) with equity, for the meek of the earth.* And the meaning of—with the rod of his mouth—is, with the breath of his lips : for he will curse them and they shall die, as it is written of the righteous, thou shalt also decree a thing and it shall be established unto thee.† And (scripture) says of the prophet Samuel ; all that he saith cometh surely to pass ;‡ and it is said of the prophet Elisha ; and he cursed them in the name of the Lord, and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tare forty and two children of them.§

5. And righteousness shall be : the righteousness and the truth to which he will firmly adhere, shall be strength to him, so that his loins shall be firm. And the clause is doubled in repeated words.

6, 7. And the wolf shall dwell : Some interpret (it thus,) that in the time of the Messiah, the nature of wild beasts and of cattle shall be changed, and return to what it was when they were originally created, and in the ark of Noah : for if when first created the lion fed upon the sheep, then|| the creation would have been destroyed. And what did the lion eat, or that sort of ravenous beasts that consume flesh ? For if he

* And this implies the other of course.

† Job xxii. 28.

‡ 1 Sam. ix. 6.

§ 2 Kings ii. 24.

|| Lit., behold.

ate the flesh of other wild beasts and of cattle, then* the world would have wanted such creatures ;† for they were all produced‡ a male and a female, no more ; and they did not delay eating until the prey had increased and multiplied. But undoubtedly they ate the grass of the field, until the prey had become sufficiently numerous,§ and from that time and onward their nature was carnivorous. So also in the ark of Noah, if the ravenous beasts had preyed on other animals, behold such prey would have been destroyed ;|| for they entered in by pairs and no more. Notwithstanding,¶ it is said, that those which by sevens he brought in of the clean (beasts,) were for the use** of the ravenous animals. And some explain the whole of this as figurative ; for the wolf and the leopard, and the bear and the lion, are all figures of wicked men, oppressors and plunderers, who (are) to the weak like wild beasts that tear in pieces the prey ; and the lamb and the cow and the calf and the kid, are all figures of the meek of the earth. And the meaning is, that in the time of the Messiah peace shall prevail in the earth, and no one shall injure another. But this exposition cannot be sustained according to what he says, they shall not hurt nor destroy in

* Lit., behold.

† Lit., that creation.

‡ Lit., born.

§ Lit., had increased and multiplied.

|| Lit., had ceased from the world.

¶ Lit., but if so.

** Lit., need.

all my holy mountain. And in Messiah's time all the world shall be in peace, as it is written, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;* and he says, and the battle-bow shall be cut off, and of the Messiah he says, and he shall speak peace unto the heathen.† Yet it cannot be doubted, that the nature of the wild beasts will not be changed. They will tear in pieces and consume flesh as they do now; but he assures Israel that the evil beasts shall not do mischief in all the land of Israel, the same as (when) he says, they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain. And the sense of—for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord—(is this,) that after they have become good and kept the way of the Lord, evil beasts shall not get the mastery over them or their cattle and property, as he assures (us) by Moses our master, on whom be peace, I will rid evil beasts out of the land,‡ and even if they roam through the land they shall do no injury. And the cow and the bear shall feed and so forth: And thus it is in the prophet Hosea,§ and in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the fowls of heaven and so forth. And the words, and the lion shall eat straw like the ox, (are to be explained thus,) as if he should eat

* Isa. ii. 4. † Zech. ix. 10. ‡ Levit. xxvi. 6. § ii. 20, (18.)

straw like the ox ; that he will not tear the flesh of animals in the land of Israel unless (indeed,) he should find carcasses. But nevertheless this may be explained figuratively, and the lion and the bear and the serpent will be figures of bad religions ; and the interpretation of—and the cow and the bear shall feed (will be this :) that the cattle* shall be wholly occupied in the service of God and not at all in the vanities of the world ; and this is what he means (by the words ;) for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.—And the fatling : Some say that this (denotes) one of the species of larger cattle ; but others explain it of fatted cattle, to which, in reference to other animals, the term fatlings would be applied, and thus the Targum of Jonathan—and the fatted.—And the cow and the bear, דוב : the word is feminine ; and so (we have) and there came forth two she bears, † רתצאנה רובים שתיים, and so עזים, עז, (and) רחלים, and their young ones (ילדיהן,) shall lie down together. ‡

8. רשעשע מאורת : Like (חור) hole : it is thus called, because it is the way of ingress to the place where the serpent is ; and so, the dens, (המנהרות,) which (are) § in the mountains—which we have inter-

* The domestic cattle, in contradistinction to the wild animals. The word is employed figuratively for those who practice the true religion.

† 2 Kings ii. 24.

‡ He means that notwithstanding the masculine form the gender is feminine, as indeed its grammatical construction shows.

§ Judg. vi. 2.

preted* by caves (המערות) and they have a hole (חור) by which the light (אורה,) enters : therefore they are so called. And the clause is two-fold, the same thing being repeated. Now (as to) the meaning of weaned, גמול : (it is) as it were a suckling, but who is called weaned when the time of its sucking is completed. And he says the suckling and the weaned child ; in reference to the serpent, inasmuch as serpents are often found in the holes of the house, and the little ones put their hands on the floor of the house, and in the holes of the walls. ידה is equivalent to ידו and means, will put forth his hand. And behold, the serpent's enmity, which it was determined, at the time of the fall† (should be directed) towards the man, shall in Messiah's age depart in all the land of Israel ; and with respect to the people of Israel, in every place whither they shall have gone, neither the serpent nor evil beasts shall injure them. And Jonathan explains מאורת (of) the appearance of the round balls (pupils) of the eyes of the basilisk serpent. He means, that as the serpent is in his hole, which is a dark place, his eye-ball shines ; and the sucking child from the outside sees the light, and imagines it to be a shining stone or a piece of glass, and stretches out his

* Kimchi alludes to his note on the text in Judges, where he gives this exposition.

† Lit., in the days of *bereshith*, meaning creation, the first word in Genesis being used to express the subject of the chapter.

hand to take it, (that is,) the thing which he imagines it to be : and he touches a basilisk, but it does him no harm. And he mentions the asp (or viper) and basilisk, because they are of the worst species of serpents, and still they will do no injury ; much less those of any other sort.

9. They shall not hurt : He calls all the land of Israel my holy mountain, and employs the term mountain, because* it is higher than any other country. And what is the reason that they shall not hurt ? Because the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord. The earth, that is, the land of Israel, as the prophet Jeremiah says,† for all of them shall know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, and so forth. As the waters cover the sea : He calls the place of the waters, sea, the waters shall fill it, the place, (or, this place) until they cover it, so that the bottom of the sea shall not be seen.

10. And there shall be a root of Jesse : that is, what sprouts from the root of Jesse, as he says, and a branch shall grow out of his roots, for Jesse is the root ; and thus the Targum of Jonathan, a son of the sons of Jesse. Which stands : that is, which shall stand in that day, the day of gathering together the captives. And it shall be for all the nations, like the standard in an army, after which, when elevated all the army will go. Thus all the

* Lit., and the sense of mountain is, that—

* xxxi. 34.

nations will seek the Messiah, and will go after him to do what he commands; all of them will obey him. Therefore he shall be in honor; so that there shall not be war with him: and he shall be in rest and in honor; for all the nations will honor him and serve him.

11. And it shall be a second time: For at the first he redeemed them from the house of servants,* from Egypt, but, in the time of collecting the captives, the Lord will raise his hand a second time to redeem them from all the countries whither they have been scattered. And this does not relate to the Babylonian captivity, for that concerned Judah and Benjamin only, and they only went out, (returned to their land,) and the ten tribes were not collected; therefore we cannot apply the phrase—a second time—to this collecting, for all Israel without a single exception went out from Egypt, and he would not say—a second time—unless it were like the first. But the collecting of these captives will be a second as it respects Egypt, for all of them went out; and thus all of them will go out when these captives are collected together. Therefore he says, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea. And why does he say,† the remnant of his people which shall be left? Because many of them were consumed in the captiv-

* Exod. xx. 2.

† Lit., what is that which he says.

ity.—And from the islands of the sea, (or maritime countries :) They also of the land of Israel, which are in the countries of Edom and Ishmael ; behold these are the islands of the sea, (or maritime countries.)

12. And will lift up a standard : As if the holy and blessed one were to raise a standard to the nations, who should come tremblingly to the place of the standard. Thus, in that day all the nations will honorably dismiss the Israelites who are in their lands.*

13. Shall depart : When the children of Israel shall be collected in their land, the jealousy which prevailed among them when they were made captives from their land, shall depart ; for there was among them a division of the kingdoms owing to jealousy towards the kingdom of the house of David.—And the adversaries in Judah shall be cut off : For of old Judah contained adversaries to Ephraim. And Ephraim : He means all Israel with the exception of Judah ; and because the Israelites were jealous of the kingdom of the house of David, Judah was adverse and hostile to them, and thus we see that they retarded the kingdom seven years, so that, (or during which) David's royal authority was confined to Judah. And thus, when David returned to the kingdom after he had

* Lit., thus in that day all the nations will dismiss the Israelites who are in their lands, who will go for themselves with honor. לָהֶם, for themselves, is redundant, like the second לָהֶם, in Gen. xii. 1.

fled away from Absalom, it is said, why did our brethren steal thee away, and so forth, and also, and the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel;* and Sheba the son of Bichri, blew a trumpet, and so forth.† And thus it was, until the kingdom was divided in the reign of Rehoboam, who said, I will add to your yoke.‡ And what does he mean by shall be cut off? He means, shall not exist; as, and the battle-bow shall be cut off.§ And the subject is repeated in different words.||

14. But they shall fly upon: They shall move against the Philistines on the west of the land of Israel: thus the Targum of Jonathan. But we explain עופר by flying, flight, (עופפת, עוף) which denotes¶ rapid motion; and by the word flight, he expresses the rapidity of their motion to the place of the Philistines, to smite and plunder them. Others again make it equivalent to ריגע, will be weary, meaning they will be fatigued, (עיפום) by smiting the shoulders of the Philistines. And the word בכתם is construct, although absolute in its form;** for according to the constructive usage it would require two soegols.†† But Ben Ashersays, that it appears thus, (that is, as pointed in the

* 2 Sam. xix. 42, 44, (41, 43.)

† Ib. xx. 1.

‡ 1 Kings, xii. 14.

§ Zech. ix. 10.

|| Lit., the clause is doubled with the subject in different words.

¶ Lit., is.

** Lit. goes according to the way in absolute.

†† Lit., its form (would be) with six points.

text,) because it is *milra*, to sustain the sound of the Pe, on account of the Pe in Philistines.*—Edom and Moab: Although they are not strangers at the present day among the nations, from whom the Israelites alone are separated on account of their law, and with whom they do not familiarly associate; but most of the other nations do so associate together. When he mentions Edom and Moab and the children of Ammon, he means their country and present inhabitants, according to what is said in the prophecy of Daniel which is yet to be fulfilled—but these shall escape out of his hand, Edom and Moab and the chief of the children of Ammon:† thus it is to be explained.—**משלוח ידם**:—that the Israelites shall lay their hands on them as they please.—**משמעתם**: that they will be obeyed in all their commands. He mentions these places, because of their proximity to the land of Israel, although all nations shall be thus subject to Israel.

15. **חֲהָרִים**. It expresses excision and dividing: and in this (latter) sense it is used in ref-

* That is, to give a distinctness to the terminating letter of **כְּתִיב** by throwing the accent on the latter syllable, whereas in its construct form **כְּתִיב** it would fall on the former. Thus the reader is the better enabled to enunciate clearly the pe which commences the next word **פְּלִשְׁתִּים**. *Milra* is a Chaldee term employed by Hebrew Grammarians to denote that the word is accented on the last syllable.

† Dan. xi. 41.

erence to the sea, as he says: to him who divided the Red Sea into parts.* The tongue of the Egyptian sea: this is the river of Egypt, which is called Sihon, (the Nile.) And it will go according to the will of God, who will make bare a way by which the redeemed may pass over.—And will shake his hand over the river: The river means the Euphrates, and so the Targum of Jonathan (explains it.) And the meaning of—will shake his hand—is, that he will bring on a violent wind which shall dry it up, as he did to the Red Sea at the exode from Egypt; as he says, and there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people, and so forth.—**בְּעִים רוּחַו**. With the strength of his wind, which shall act† upon and dry up the river. And the word **בְּעִים** is to be explained according to the subject, as it never elsewhere occurs‡ in scripture. But Rabbi my brother, Rabbi Moses, interprets **עִים** by **לְעֵי הַשָּׂדֶה**, for a heap of the field,§ the explanation of which is **גִּל**, heap. Thus **בְּעִים** will have the same meaning as **בְּגִלִּים**, that is to say, on the heaps of the sea. And the river: he will shake his hand and (raise) the wind to quiet them and to dry them. And shall smite it into seven streams: the holy blessed one shall smite the river Euphrates, and force it|| with a very strong wind

* Ps. cxxxvi. 13.

† Lit., go, move.

‡ Lit., has no companion.

§ Mic. i.6.

|| I am not certain that this is the true meaning. The original is **וַיִּנְדֹּף**.

until it turn into seven streams, and there shall be a way between stream and stream. And make pass—those who go over these ways; with sandals—because the way will be dry as if there were no water there, and they will go over them with sandals on their feet. הֵרִיד is a transitive verb; and it is God who causes to go, and he that passes over is the one that goes. But what does he mean by seven? Perhaps, there will be seven ways and no more; although it is probable that (the number) seven is employed to express multitude, meaning many ways, which is agreeable to usage:* as, seven times according to your sins;† the just falleth seven times and riseth up again.‡

16. And there shall be; in this river there shall be a highway for the remnant of his people; that is to say, there shall be a prepared way, as if it had been a road a long time. We have already explained (what is meant by) the remnant.—And why does he say from Assyria? Because for those in Assyria the direct course|| to the land

* Lit., for this is the way of the language.

† Lev. xxvi. 21.

‡ Prov. xxvi. 16.

|| I conjecture the true reading to be שֶׁל אֶרֶץ instead of לְאֶרֶץ.

According to the printed text, the last clause of the sentence may be connected with the first, though not without harshness, thus: Because as to those who of the land of Israel are in Assyria, the direct course is over the Euphrates.

of Israel is over the Euphrates. As it was :
meaning, as there was a highway in the Red
Sea, so shall there be a highway in the river
Euphrates.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI ABEN EZRA, ON ISAIAH XI.

1. AND there shall come forth : Many interpreters say, that this is the Messiah, and that the meaning is, he will destroy the camp of the Assyrians who laid seige to Jerusalem, and moreover, that the time of the complete redemption shall come to Jerusalem. But, in the opinion of Rabbi Moses Haccoben (the priest,) it refers to Hezekiah, agreeably to the context.* חוטר is used in the Targum to express the sense of מטה a staff (or rod.) גזע, trunk ; this is equivalent to—offspring, and נצר to branch, as—an abominable branch.† And the sense of, and shall come forth is,‡ that he was little at the time of the prophecy.

2. ונחה, according to the form of, and is returned (ושבה) unto her father's house ;|| of (that class of verbs in which only) two (of the radical

* Lit., for he (or it) is closely connected with this section.

† Isa. xiv. 19.

‡ That is, the language implies.

|| Levit. xxiii. 13.

letters)* appear. And behold he explains—the Spirit of the Lord—to be† the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and thus it is written of Joshua in the law. And might: For Hezekiah was mighty, as it is written.

3. וְהָרִיחַ: The sense of hearing will often err, so as to hear (in imagination) when no voice is uttered; and the eye will err, so that an object at rest will seem to it to be moving: but not so the sense of smelling. וְהָרִיחַ, as if (it were,) he will smell the thing in the fear of the Lord which he has. He will not judge as it may appear to his eyes, nor as he shall hear; for the witnesses may be false: and such are the reproofs (or punishments) and judgments which are according to the law of the kingdoms.‡

4. But with righteousness will he judge the poor: according to the judgments of the law, which does not show partiality to the poor. And he will reprove (or, pass sentence) with equity: with uprightness for the good. And he will smite the earth: With his mouth, as if it were a rod for the wicked.

5. And (righteousness) shall be: And behold righteousness shall not depart from him all his days in all that he does.

* In other words כְּתוּבָה is the form *ain vau*, from כָּתוּב which loses the middle radical.

† Lit., that the Spirit of the Lord is.

‡ That is, such is often the result in cases that are brought before ordinary civil tribunals. Such: lit., these.

6. And the wolf shall dwell: This is figurative of the peace which shall prevail in his time. And the fatling: I have (elsewhere) explained this to be one of the (different) species of the ox (kind,) the fat of which is prohibited.

7. And the cow: This is (the animal when) grown, for the calf is little; and some say that the female is stronger than the male. Shall eat straw: As if its natural character should depart, and it should not injure by preying (on other animals.)

8. 'רשעשע', Shall play: you will always find the reduplicated verb used in this sense.—הָרַר, the mouth or the nose.—מַאֲרֶרֶת, the eye, because it commands* the light. The *he* in הָרַר may be instead of *yod*, (in) shoot (יָדַר) at her:† and the meaning is, he shall put forth his hand, or else it has no analogous expression (in scripture.)

9. They shall not hurt: The asp and the basilisk; as if all the land of Israel were full of the knowledge of the Lord: for it is known, that he who knows the Lord will never be destroyed, but be built up and established. As the waters: There is an ellipsis of the word which; and thus he (says,) that knowledge shall be multiplied as the waters cover over the sea, so that they shall not fail, but be increased.

10. And there shall be: If (this) relate to the

* Lit., is mistress of.

† Jer. l. 14.

Messiah (the meaning is,) that the entire world* shall be subjected to him. But, in the opinion of Rabbi Moses Haccohen before mentioned, (it relates) to the sign of the sun (dial,) for thus it is written—to inquire into the wonder.† And his rest shall be with glory : and thus—(the money, or the silver and gold) that was found in the house of the Lord.‡

11. And it shall be—a second time : With respect to the deliverance from Egypt. And behold, to prove that he refers to the time of the Messiah, it is said, that the deliverance of the second temple§ was not their entire deliverance, for all the tribes, indeed all Judah did not return to their land. But those who explain it of Hezekiah (say,) that the people assembled together in his reign, when they saw that Jerusalem was delivered, and Sennacherib dead, after the death of the multitudes that composed his camp.

12. And he will raise up : As if the Lord would raise up an ensign to all the nations, so that Israel may see it, and return to their own land. Israel means the ten tribes, and he mentions Judah also.

* Lit., all the world, the whole of it. † 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

‡ He seems to intimate that the temple, the place of Jehovah's rest, was to be made glorious by accessions of wealth. The allusion is to 2 Kings xii. 10 ; xvi. 8, and the text is imperfectly quoted, as is very usual with Aben Ezra.

§ That is, the deliverance from the Babylonian captivity, which was followed by the rebuilding of the second temple.

And shall depart: So that Ephraim shall not envy because the Messiah is of the family of Judah; and if Hezekiah (be meant,) because his kingdom continues. And the adversaries of Judah: those who hate her. If (it relate) to Hezekiah, (it may be explained) of the Syrians. But behold they were not hostile to Ephraim, so as to requite them in the time of Pekah.

14. **וְעָפַר**; Some say it is to be explained like a flying (**עָפָה**) roll;* but Rabbi Moses Haccohen says, that there is no similar use of the word,† and that the sense is like **יָנוּחוּ** they shall rest, and the region of country is omitted. Towards the west: For they lie west of the land of Israel. —Children of the east: These are the Syrians. —**מִשְׁלֹחַ יָדָם**: So that they will stretch out their hand to spoil them. And the children of Ammon **מִשְׁמַעְתָּם**: They shall turn to their obedience, or under their obedience; (that is, obedience to them.)

15. **וְהָחֲרִים**: He will destroy (or cut off,) according to the invariable sense of **חָרַם**, so that Israel shall pass over it on dry ground, and the sea shall not retard their rapid return.—**בְּעִים**: This word never elsewhere occurs in scripture. The mem is radical, and the meaning is, with strength. Those interpreters who have explained

* Zech. v. 1.

† Lit., there is no neighbor to it.

it like—if ye will inquire, inquire ye,* are unacquainted with grammar.—The river: That is the stream, (or the Nile†) הִדְרִיךְ is a transitive verb (used of) two objects.

16. And there shall be: Here is an exposition of the meaning of the destroying and the smiting, as the text alludest‡ to the dividing of the Red Sea.

* Isa. xxi. 12. He means, expositors who attempt to derive it from בִּעַר.

† The original is: הָרָא הַיָּאֵר.

‡ Lit., as הִדְרִיךְ refers.

COMMENTARY ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

INTRODUCTION.

THE section of Isaiah's prophecies which is contained in the last three verses of the 52nd chapter and the whole of the 53d, has afforded subject of much disputation. It has been interpreted either of some individual, or of a body of men personified. Of those who adopt the former view, some have attempted to apply it to Hezekiah or some other Jewish king, to Jeremiah, to Isaiah himself, and even to Moses ; but by far the largest proportion of Christian expositors, and several also of the Jewish, particularly the most ancient, have explained it of the Messiah. Those interpreters who maintain the latter of the two views above mentioned, pretty generally agree in the opinion, that the section relates to the Jewish people, or at least the better part of them, although a few consider it as descriptive of the prophetic body.

Among the defenders of this last view, Gesenius is the most prominent. He regards the Lord's

servant as a personification of the Hebrew prophets, whose exaltation is predicted in lii. 13. Heretofore deformed by opposition and sufferings, they shall still at a future period fill the people with joy. Kings shall honor them, when unexpected events, not believed when announced, shall have taken place, 14, 15 ; liii. 1. Deserted, despised and afflicted, God allowed them to grow up among the people, 2, 3, and sent them subjected to sufferings, which they bore patiently as an offering, 7. But they bore them for the sins of the people, which the Lord laid upon them, 4, 5, 6. They were removed from their sufferings by death, and, although innocent, were buried with transgressors, none understanding the real design of their sufferings, 8, 9. As a reward, they shall yet live long, see a late posterity, enjoy the spread of their doctrine, and divide their portion with the mighty, 10–12.

The Jewish expositors, from the middle ages down to the present time, explain the section of their own nation. Their existing state of depression and persecution, and their future supposed exaltation and supremacy over all other people, constitute the leading points of the prophecy. Some modern Christian expositors have adopted the same view. The ancients invariably interpret it of the Messiah.

That the section comprehends a reference to the state of the Jewish nation is a view, which

seems to have been favorably regarded by some of their expositors at a very early period. The Chaldee Targum, a translation of which on this portion is subjoined to the following Rabbinical Commentary, although it directly declares the Lord's servant to be the Messiah, does evidently, in its paraphrastic exposition, introduce the Jewish nation in close connection with this its prince and saviour. The reader will perceive that the Messiah and the people are brought forward with nearly equal prominence, the transitions from the one to the other being altogether unfounded and strangely arbitrary. Still it shows us, that in the time of its author, a reference to the nation was superadded to the Messianic interpretation. This interpretation seems gradually to have been superseded by it, for Origen tells us, that, on his alleging passages from this section in argument with some learned Jews, he was met by the objection, that no individual, but the whole people were intended by the prophet; a view which he immediately attacks as unsupported.*

It would not comport with the nature of this brief introduction, to examine at any length the grounds on which these various theories of exposition are attempted to be sustained; yet I cannot suffer the present Jewish interpretation to appear

* Origen against Celsus, Book 1, p. 42, 43, Hoeschel's edition, 4to. 1605.

in detail, without submitting one or two preliminary remarks.

It is a serious objection to this interpretation, applying also to that of Gesenius, that, in the one case the national, and in the other the prophetic body, are said to sustain vicarious punishment, intended to atone for the sins of others. Surely the prophets are never represented to us in Scripture as propitiating, by any sufferings of their own, for the offences of others. The remark applies also to the Jewish nation; and undoubtedly it must have been felt as a difficulty by Aben Ezra and Kimchi, inasmuch as they put this representation in the mouth of the Heathen, and the latter writer in particular guards his reader against any admission of its correctness, by ascribing it to weakness and incapacity, and declaring it to be at variance with other declarations of scripture. Neither is there in the whole section a single intimation, that this is merely the language of the people and founded in error. On the contrary, it plainly appears to be the prophet's own statement, and the other view of the subject is artificial and forced, and not supported by any analagous portions of Isaiah's prophecy. A construction so wholly arbitrary, is hardly worthy of refutation.

Most of the objections to the Christian exposition of the prophecy arise from the mistaken supposition, that, as the degradation described in the section is physical and secular, and consequently

must be literally understood, therefore the exaltation also must be secular, and consist in superiority ostensibly displayed here on earth. And the same mode of argument is now resorted to, in order to prove a temporal and visible reign of Christ in Jerusalem literally understood. But, against the application of this principle by Jews, it may be sufficient to remark, that Aben Ezra himself who advances the argument, admits, that the current of older Jewish exposition of liii. 12, ran directly the other way, favoring a figurative meaning; and that the words themselves do bear such an interpretation. And if this be allowable here, it is equally so in those other places, where long life and numerous progeny are ascribed to the Messiah. Such interpretations are in harmony with other parts of scripture, of which it is sufficient to refer to the promise: "instead of thy fathers shall be thy children (the Messiah's,) whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth."* Against Gesenius, who also urges a literal interpretation of the promised exaltation, it is sufficient to remark, that such an exaltation is hardly compatible with the character of the prophetic body, and rather implies royal distinction.

This learned writer allows that the Messianic exposition was the commonly received one in the age of the New Testament, and by its writers.

* Ps xlv. 17.

Such a consideration, however, has but little weight with him in support of its correctness. But with those who regard the New Testament as a record of inspired truth, it cannot fail of receiving the profoundest deference, and, even as a source of historical evidence illustrative of the opinions of its age, it is not to be disregarded. It becomes necessary therefore to examine how this section of Isaiah is quoted in the sacred books of Christians.

In appealing to this source of evidence, there is one view of it, in which even the Jewish reader ought to acquiesce. To the Christian, any argument legitimately drawn from assertion, reasoning, or necessary implication, clearly shown to be contained in the New Testament, ought to be decisive. But at present I quote it merely as a historical record of fact, and as such its claims on all, Jews as well as Christians, are equally imperative. Its antiquity, as a production of the first century, exhibiting the views and sentiments of its age, and its claims to respect arising out of its general character, are incontrovertible. As giving views of its own age among the people to whom it was originally addressed, of whom its writers were a part, no other document can be adduced, worthy of superior, if of equal credit.

In the New Testament, passages are quoted from this prophecy, in such a connection as to show, that no other application than that to an in-

dividual person, and that person the Messiah, was thought of. St. Matthew* employs the language of the fourth verse in reference to the Messiah's healing diseases. Whatever difficulty may be supposed to be involved in the application, has no bearing on the point here under consideration. The quotation proves that the writer understood the prophecy to refer to the Messiah; and the writer was a Jew, who lived 1800 years ago, and wrote especially for the benefit of his own nation. Either then we must assume him to have been wholly ignorant of their views on this subject, a supposition confuted by the whole tenor of his book, or we must grant that his Jewish readers recognized the application of this text in some way to their expected Messiah.

Two other biographers of our Lord's life, themselves also of the Jewish nation, make a similar application of the words in the 12th verse: "he was numbered with the transgressors."† They must have known, that their brethren would not hesitate to regard the quotation as intended of the predicted Messiah. There is nothing in the connection in which these passages stand, that authorizes the expositor to resort to the principle of accommodation.

The representation of Jesus as a pattern of patience under unmerited suffering is illustrated by

* viii. 17.

† Mark xv. 28., Luke xxii. 37.

St. Peter,* with an evident view to the language of this section. He speaks of the Messiah as “bearing” our sins, and “healing us by his stripes,” quoting the very words of the prophet.† It is impossible to avoid the conclusion, that the Jews of his day referred the section to the Messiah.

St. Paul also, in his epistle to the Romans,‡ applies the first words of the 53d chapter, “who hath believed our report, and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” to the want of faith in the Gospel of Christ. This learned disciple of Gamaliel, second to none of his race in acquaintance with Jewish tradition and literature, does not seem to have ever heard of the notion of “the wise Rabbi Abraham”§, that this is the language of the ignorant Heathen, respecting their own unbelief in predictions of Jewish national elevation. He cites it without the least hesitation, and so also does St. John,|| as a prophetic description of want of faith in the true Messiah. Any other application of the prophet’s language seems to have been entirely unknown to them.

There is yet another place in the New Testament in which this section is quoted in direct and unequivocal reference to the Messiah. The evangelist Philip is directed to join the Ethiopian nobleman on his return from Jerusalem. He

* 1 Peter ii. 22, 24.

† Verse. 4, 5.

‡ x. 16.

§ See the reference to Aben Ezra in Kimchi on Isa. liii. 14.

|| xii 38.

hears him reading this prophecy of Isaiah, and is addressed with the inquiry, "of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man?"* That the inspired seer intended to exhibit a personification of the class of persons to which he himself belonged, or of the nation in general, is certainly an idea which never occurred to the Ethiopian. He understood the prophet in accordance with common sense, and most naturally inquired of what individual he was speaking. His companion too had no other impression of the prophecy, and immediately applied it to the Messiah. "Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."†

The evidence afforded by the New Testament clearly proves, that the Jews of that period explained the prophecy of the Messiah. And the result thus obtained from this most unexceptionable source of information, is confirmed by other Jewish writings.

It ought not to escape notice, that Aben Ezra, in his introductory remarks on this section, expressly declares, that many of the old Rabbies did explain it of the Messiah. His objections disclose the very pith and germ of the rejection of this application. "What then is the meaning of—he was despised and rejected of men? He

* Acts viii. 34.

† v. 35.

was taken from prison and from judgment?" It introduces a suffering Messiah; an idea which the Jewish mind, from before the Christian era to the present time, has either rejected with scorn, or endeavored to evade, by introducing the figment of two Messiahs; a son of Joseph and a son of David, allowing that the former shall be subjected to suffering and death, but claiming for the latter immunity from affliction, and unprecedented worldly prosperity and regal honor. And it is particularly worthy of observation, how carefully the Chaldee Targum applies to king Messiah whatever of reward or glory appears in the section, while the afflictions and degradation therein depicted are represented as the appropriate punishment of his enemies. Still, there were Israelites at a very early age, whose views of their promised anointed one were not so entirely secularized. From the time that the venerable Simeon intimated the sufferings of the son in announcing the anguish of the mother,* there have not been wanting others of his nation, who knew that, in accordance with the revealed will of God, "it behooved the Christ to suffer,"† and then to receive his reward of glory. These Jews did not scruple to apply texts in this section to the Messiah, who was to atone for the sins of the men and to bear their diseases. In the Talmud we meet with the

* Luke ii. 35.

† xxiv. 46.

strange assertion, that the Messiah is called leprous or the leper, on account of the word smitten, (the original of which is sometimes used of leprosy,) applied to him in liii. 4. "Leper is his name, as it is said, but he bore our sicknesses, and our sorrows he sustained them, and we regarded him smitten, stricken by God, and afflicted."* The book *Pesikta* represents the Messiah as redeeming mankind, and applies to him the same words. The *Midrash Tanchuma*, an old commentary on the Pentateuch, explains the first verse of this section of Isaiah, respecting king Messiah, whom it describes as more exalted than Abraham, than Moses, than the ministering angels. The reader may find these and other equally pertinent passages, quoted from ancient Jewish books, in HENGSTENBERG'S *CHRISTOLOGY*;† a work worthy of all commendation, for its deep religious tone, its profound learning, and philological accuracy.

This section, then, describes the sufferings and exaltation of the promised Messiah. There does not appear to be positive proof that any other idea was intended. If, however, a more comprehensive view of it can be taken, which while it maintains the Messiah to be the direct and primary subject of the prediction, does also disclose in

* Bab. Tal. Treatise Sanhedrim, fol. 98, 2. The reader may see the whole context of this remarkable passage quoted in my *Essay on John vi.* p 86-88.

† Vol. I. p. 484-486, Keith's Translation.

the back ground as it were, of the picture, some faint delineations of another, less prominent, but still connected with it; such a view would undoubtedly harmonize with several other prophetic representations.* Then, the graphical delineation of the great prophet might represent also, though faintly, the character and state of the whole prophetic body; the marked description of the earthly humiliation and celestial dignity of the universal king, might trace out, yet not without some indistinctness, the similar condition of his true Israel, ultimately united to him by a living faith. In such a view, the application to the inferior object must of course be very general.

A clear and full developement of the principle of prophetic interpretation here suggested, would extend this introduction to a disproportionate length, and have no necessary connection with its main purpose. The truth of it can hardly be questioned by the Christian interpreter, though its application requires caution and judgment, combined with competent knowledge of holy Scripture.

* The following references may be taken as a specimen of such, 2 Sam. vii. compared with Heb. i. 5; Hosea xi., 1. with Matt. ii. 15; Deut. xviii. 9-22, with Acts iii. 22, 23; and various passages quoted in the New Testament from the last twenty-seven chapters of Isaiah, especially Matt. iii. 3, with the parallel places in the other Gospels' and in 1 Pet. i. 24, 25, from Isaiah xl. 3-8.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI SOLOMON
JARCHI,
ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

13. BEHOLD, my servant: behold, in after times, my servant Jacob shall prosper; (that is,) the righteous among them.

14. As many people were astonished at them, when they saw their state of humiliation, and said to one another, how much more deformed* than man is their appearance! See how dark, (contemptible,) is their form compared with that of other men!

16. So: as we see with our own eyes.—
כִּן יִזְהַ'†. So now indeed he, his hand shall be great, and he shall put down the horns of the nations who scattered him.‡—יִקְפְּצוּ'. They will shut their mouths through the greatness of their astonishment, for they shall see in him honor such as was not told them of any man.—הַתְּבוֹנְנִי',

* Lit., corruption. "Marred." Eng. Trans.

† "So shall he sprinkle many nations." Eng. Trans.

‡ Zech. i. 21.

they will understand. LIII. 1. Who hath believed our report? Thus will they say to each other: if we had heard from the mouth of others what we see, it would not have been credible.—And the arm of the Lord: to whom hath it been revealed—up to this time, in greatness and majesty like this?

2. And he shall grow up like a plant before him. Before this people attained such greatness,* they were in a very low condition, and grew up among their trees (as it were,†) like a sucker among suckers of the oaks.—And like a root: (which) grows up from a dry ground.—No form: at the beginning he had neither form nor glory.‡—And when we shall see him, (there is) no beauty that we should desire him: and when we saw him at the beginning, without (beautiful) appearance, how should we desire him? That we should desire him, is expressive of admiration.

3. He was despised and rejected of men. It was the usage of this prophet to speak of all Israel as one man: (as,) fear not, my servant Jacob; and, now hear, my servant Jacob;§ and

* Lit., before this greatness came to the people.

† I have introduced the expression, as it were, to illustrate what I suppose to be the author's meaning. The passage is not clear. Breithaupt, in his Latin translation of Jarchi, says, that one of the two manuscripts which he collated read **מֵאֲרֵץ**, from the land, instead of **מֵאֲרֵז**, from his trees.

‡ "Comeliness." Eng. Trans.

§ xliv. 1, 2.

also in this place, behold, my servant shall prosper, he speaks of the house of Jacob, and the word **יִשְׁכִּיל** expresses prosperity, as—and Daniel prospered in all his ways.*—**וּכְמִסְתָּרָא**. Through the greatness of their shame and degradation, they as it were hid their faces from us, they bound up the face by concealing (it,) that we should not see them, as a wounded man hides his face and fears to be looked at.

4. But our griefs he bore: The word **אָכֵן** is always used in the sense of but. But now we see that his degradation did not come upon him through wrath, but he was chastised with chastisements, in order that all the nations might be atoned for by the chastisements of Israel. Sickness which should have come on us he bore.—And we regarded him: we supposed that he was hated by God.

5. But he was not so, but was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.—The chastisement of our peace was upon him: there came on him the chastisements whereby our peace was attained,† since he was chastised, in order that there might be peace to all the world.

6. All we like sheep have gone astray. Now it appears that all the heathen nations have erred. **הַפְּגִיעַ בּוֹ**. He was entreated through him, and

* 1 Sam. xviii. 14.

† Lit., the chastisements of the peace which was for us.

‡ "Hath laid on him." Eng. Trans.

was reconciled as respects the iniquity of all of us, so that his world should not be destroyed. It is a term of supplication, in French *espriér*.*

7. He was oppressed (or exacted ;†) behold by exactors and oppressors: and he was afflicted, (or he answered ;‡) by fraudulent declarations, in French *surparler*.§—And he opened not his mouth: he bore and was still, like the lamb which is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep which before her shearers is dumb. The words—he opened not his mouth—refer to the lamb led to the slaughter.

8. From prison and from judgment was he taken away. The prophet proclaims§ that the nations will say this in after times, when they shall see that he was taken away from the prison in which he had been confined by them, and from the judgment of the chastisements which he had hitherto borne.—And his generation: the years that passed along over him ;|| who will relate :

* The French word now employed is *prier*. Whether this or the other were in more common use when Jarchi wrote, I am unable to say. Breithaupt tells us that one of his manuscripts read *דישפרייאיר*, which he expresses by *despriér*. He intimates that the text may be corrupted.

† *נגש* means to oppress and also to exact; and *ענה* to afflict and to answer.

‡ I have followed the reading of one of Breithaupt's manuscripts, *שורפרליר*.

§ Lit., announces and says.

|| This is a literal translation, to which I can attach no clear meaning.

the distresses which befel him?—For he was cut off: he was (so) at the beginning when* he was taken away captive; from the land of the living, that is, the land of Israel. Because for the transgression of my people, this stroke fell upon† the righteous among them.

9. And he gave‡ with the wicked his grave: He delivered up himself to be buried according to all, (or, in any way,) that the wicked among the nations determined concerning him; who condemned them§ to death, and the burial of asses in the bowels of the dogs. At the sentence of the wicked, he preferred being buried to denying the living God.—And with a rich (man|| in) his death: At the sentence of the ruler he delivered himself up to all kinds of death which he pronounced against him,¶ because he would not venture to deny**(God, would not) do wickedness and commit violence, like all the nations among whom he sojourned. And no deceit (was) in his mouth: in venturing on false worship with (or to) God.††

* Lit., and.

† Lit., came to.

‡ The English translation is, "and he made." The literal version is, *and he gave*; or, *they gave*: that is, people gave, allotted. Such indefinite usage is very common.

§ The original is plural.

|| The original is in the singular number.

¶ Lit., decided upon him.

** Lit., take on him denial.

†† The printed reading is באֵלֶּרֶךְ, but Breithaupt's manuscript has לֵאֵלֶּרֶךְ, which he prefers.

10. And it pleased the Lord : the holy blessed God was pleased to bruise him, and to turn him to good ; therefore he put him to grief : (or he made him sick.)—If* and so forth. God says, I will see if his soul be devoted† and delivered up to my holiness, (so as) to return it to me (as) a trespass offering on account of all his faithlessness. I will recompense it to him, and he shall see his seed and so forth. כַּפֵּר denotes atonement which a man makes to one whom he has offended, in French amende ; as it is said of (or in‡) the Philistines, ye shall not return it empty, but shall return to him a trespass offering.

11. Of the travail of his life : He ate and was satisfied, and neither plundered nor committed violence.—By his knowledge will my righteous (servant) do justice to : My servant gave true judgment to all who came before him for judgment. And their iniquities he bore, according to the way of all the righteous,§ as it is said—thou and thy sons shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary.||

12. Therefore : on account of his having done this, I will divide to him an inheritance and lot

* The English translation has *when*.

† Lit., given.

‡ Or, it may be translated, as was said by the Philistines. The reference is to 1 Sam. vi. 3.

§ That is, as they are accustomed to do.

|| Num. xviii. 1.

among many (or, the great :) with the most ancient fathers.—הערה. He poured out his life to death, (as) the word (is used elsewhere ;) she poured out (emptied) her pitcher.*—And he was numbered with the transgressors. He bore chastisements as if he had sinned and transgressed ; but on account of others he bore the sin of the many.—And he made intercession for the transgressors : on account of chastisements which were inflicted† on him, kindness hath come to the world.‡

* Gen. xxiv. 20.

† Lit., have come.

‡ The reading given by Breithaupt is much more intelligible than the ordinary one, and for this and other reasons, I have not hesitated to translate from it. It is as follows: על ידי יסוריך שבאו אליו באה טובה לעולם.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI DAVID KIMCHI
ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

13. BEHOLD, my servant shall prosper. This section relates to the captivity* of Israel, and he calls them my servant, as he says—thou Israel my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen.† He says, behold the time shall come that my servant Jacob shall prosper, and be exalted and raised up and be very high. יִצְחִיִּל, he shall prosper, as —and David prospered in all his ways ;‡ and thus the Targum of Jonathan, (which translates it) יִצְלָה. And he says, shall be exalted and be raised and be high, employing a term of elevation in every word, because his elevation should be exceedingly great. And now I will explain the section according to

* The Rabbies often use the term captivity to express the dispersed and subjected condition of the Jews subsequently to the destruction of their civil and religious polity by the Romans.

† Isa. xliv. 1.

‡ 1 Sam. xviii. 14.

the explanation of my respected father, whose memory be blessed, in the book Haggalui.*

14. As (many) were astonished : (it is) expressive† of wonder, as--astonished among them.‡ He says, as they wondered at the greatness of thy humiliation. And they were right to wonder, for they saw that he was more deformed than any man ; his appearance and his form more than the rest of the children of men. And, inasmuch as (the prophet) speaks sometimes in the second person, as when he says—at thee,—and sometimes in the third, as when he says—his appearance and his form—; this is the usage of Scripture in many places, as we have written. And the wise Rabbi Abraham explains (the place thus,) that—so deformed more than man (was) his appearance—are the words of the nations who wondered at Israel, and said that their appearance was more deformed than (that of other) men. For how many nations are there in the world who think that the Jew's form (appearance) is different from (that of) all others. Indeed there are some of them who inquire whether a Jew has a mouth or an eye. Thus he in the land of Ishmael and in the land of Edom.—משחת: The mem is with chirek, and it is an adjective (or concrete ;)

* This book is said to have been written in opposition to Christianity. The word may mean, the revealed. See Wolf's *Bibliotheca Hebræa*, Vol. iii. p. 423.

† Lit., a matter.

‡ Ezek. iii. 15.

and thus (in) הערים המבדלות, the separate cities,* the מ has chirek and (the word is) an adjective.†—ותארו is with cholem, on account of the Aleph.

15. כן יזה.‡ It conveys the meaning of discourse, like יטיף, it shall drop, which expresses the idea of sprinkling and also of discoursing : (as) they dropped water ;§ in the sense of sprinkling : they shall not drop—they will drop ;|| in the sense of discoursing. Thus יזה means discourse ; and it is a transitive verb in Hiphil, in French parler. He says, as they wondered at his humiliation, so shall they wonder at his greatness, and shall speak of it continually.--Kings יקפצו ¶ their mouths at him : Even to kings their glory shall appear to be great glory : and accordingly he says, and the nations shall see thy righteousness and all kings thy glory.** יקפצו is a word expressive of opening, as—skipping†† upon the hills—which is the opening of the steps in springing, and also of shutting, as—thou shalt not shut,‡‡ thy

* Josh. xvi. 9.

† That is, the Hebrew word, though a participle, is used like an adjective. It is rendered in the English Translation, “separate,” not separated.

‡ So shall he sprinkle. Eng. Trans.

§ Judg. v. 4.

|| Mic. ii. 6. The English Translation has “prophesy.”

¶ Shall shut. Eng. Trans.

** Isa. lxii. 2.

†† Song of Solomon, ii. 8.

‡‡ Deut. xv. 7. It is hardly necessary to say, that in this and the former reference, the original word is the same as that employed by Isaiah.

hand. And both these ideas may be comprehended* in the word; (as if he had said,) they opened their mouth to recount his greatness, or, they laid (their) hand upon (their) mouth through the greatness of their wonder.—For that which was not told them shall they see; they will see more of his greatness than had been told them, and more than they had heard will they at that time understand of his greatness.

LIII. 1. Who hath believed: The nations will then say, who believed the account which we heard respecting him from the mouth of the prophets, or from the mouth of those who speak in their name? We did not believe what we now see with our eyes.—And the arm of the Lord for whom hath it been manifested—like as it hath been manifested for this (people?) Or, for whom†—may be interpreted in the way of (ironical) contempt: for whom hath it been manifested as it hath been manifested for this (people!) meaning, who was there for whom the arm of the Lord was manifested?‡

* Lit., explained.

† He means, the whole clause beginning with these words.

‡ The meaning of Kimchi seems to be this; that the nations will either be amazed at the evident manifestation of God's power in favor of the Jews, or else they will deride them for the want of it with bitter sarcasm. In the former case, the reference will be to their expected restoration and prosperity; in the latter, to their previous degradation.

2. And he shall grow up as a sucker.* Off—his branches shall spread;—as the root which is in a dry ground: and he shall grow up as a sucker; from him who (or that which) had neither form or beauty:† so this (people) was. And in my opinion the explanation is (as follows.) Now this (people) went up from the captivity in the presence of God, and they went up from the captivity in an extraordinary way, as if a sucker should grow up from a dry ground, or if a root of a tree or an herb should be found which sprouts in a dry ground, which would be extraordinary: so their going up from the captivity was extraordinary. And the same thing is repeated in different words.—No form to him: while he was in the captivity he had neither form nor honor; meaning ornament, beauty. And we saw him and no beauty: and we looked at him, and his appearance was not beautiful, but shocking and different from the rest of mankind. That we should desire him: (that is,) and we did not desire him, but loathed him. The negative particle, which is here introduced, qualifies both the expressions.‡

* As a tender plant. Eng. Trans.

† That is, of the same sort as, corresponding with. He means, that the original word **יֶרֶק** *sucker*, is the same as that rendered *branches* in the passage quoted from Hosea, xiv. 7. (6.)

‡ Lit., honor.

§ Lit., **וְלֹא** which he has mentioned (or recorded,) stands at the place of two; meaning it qualifies both **מֵרֶאֱוָה** and **נִתְמַדְהוּ**.

3. He was despised : It were unnecessary to say that we did not desire him ; as the contrary,* he was despised in our eyes.—וְחָדָל אִישִׁים Who was less (or, more despicable) than the sons of men : or the meaning is, he was rejected by men, who did not associate with him.—A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (or sickness :) the sorrows and the grief (or sickness, signify) the distresses of the captivity ; and the meaning of acquainted is, that he knew and was accustomed to put on† the yoke of the captivity.—וּכְמִסְתָּר פָּנִים. As, through great aversion, we hide the face from that which we do not like to look at ; because we loathed him, and did not at all regard him.

4. But our griefs (or sicknesses :) The prophet Ezekiel writes, the son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son ;‡ how much less (then) one man (in general) that of another, and how much less a people that of another people. If (it be) so, how is this—our griefs he bore ; he was wounded for our transgressions, and by his stripes we are healed ? And is not this like that which Jeremiah says in the Book of Lamentations ? Our fathers have sinned and are not, and we have borne their iniquities.§ For that cor-

* Lit., but also (or even.)

† xviii. 20.

‡ Lit., to put over on him.

§ v. 7.

responds with—visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children,* and takes place† when the children continue to practice‡ the works of their fathers, as he says—of them that hate me:§ for it is right with God|| that the son should bear his iniquity, the iniquity of the father. But what Jeremiah says, he says in the language of the lamenting: for, in the midst of their distress, their words would not be with judgment and gravity. But this is what the nations will say; truly he hath borne our griefs and such like, is their own language: not that Israel did bare the iniquity of the nations, but they thought so when they knew, as they saw in the time of the deliverance, that the religion which Israel clung to was true, and the religion which they clung to was false; and they said, truly our fathers inherited lies, vanity and nothingness, and so forth.¶ They say, according to their own conjecture, if so, what was the distress which Israel bore in the captivity? behold, it was not on account of their iniquity, for they clung to a right religion, and we, because we enjoyed** peace, and quietness, and rest, and confidence, we clung to a false religion. If the grief and the sorrow which should have come on us came thus on them, and

* Exod. xx. 5.

† Lit., this is.

‡ Lit., hold fast in their hands.

§ Exod. xx. 5.

|| Or, it is a judgment from God.

¶ Jer. xvi. 19.

** Lit., there was to us.

if they were a ransom and expiation for us, and we did consider them,* when in captivity, as stricken and smitten by God, and afflicted by the hand of God, on account of their* iniquity; now indeed we see that this is not on account of their* iniquity, but on account of ours: this is what he means.†

5. And he was wounded. מְחֻלָּל is a verb of the quadriliteral form,§ of the same meaning as חָלַל, to be in pain as a travelling woman, and from the same root. And—smitten||—corresponds with ¶—bath smitten my life down to the ground.** 'מֹוסֵר שׁוֹמֵר שׁוֹמֵר is like כָּלָנוּ, we *all*; like הַגִּלָּת שְׁלֹמִים, it shall be *wholly* carried away captive; †† like גִּלָּת שְׁלֹמִים, that is to say גִּלָּת

* In the original the number is changed from the plural to the singular, because the verb here quoted from the fourth verse has the singular suffix.

† Lit., says. The verb *to say*, both in the Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament, is often used to express *intention*. In this sense it appears to be employed in Gal. iii. 16; “he does not mean of seeds, as of many, but as of one.” That is, the promise just quoted relates to one particular class of descendants of Abraham, and not to his posterity in general. Many commentators have supposed the apostle to be reasoning from the use of the singular number in the original Hebrew, and have thus embarrassed themselves in a difficulty of their own making; whereas he rather appears to be merely explaining its meaning in the passage quoted, with the view of applying it to his subject.

§ That is, it is quadriliteral in the form here used, in Piel. The *vau* it must be remembered is radical.

|| Eng. Trans. “bruised.” ¶ Lit., of. See note † on p. 121.

** Ps. cxliii. 3.

†† Jer. xiii. 19.

שְׁלֵמָה, the *whole* captivity.* The chastisements which should all have come on us came on him.† But some explain it from שְׁלֹמֶה, peace, namely, that we were in peace, and the chastisement should have come on us on account of our iniquities, but it came on him.—And by his stripes: corresponding with, stripe for stripe,‡ only the one is dageshed and the other not. And the (expressions) *stripes* and *stricken* are figurative, (representing) the distresses of the captivity. And the meaning of—we are healed—is like, for I am the Lord that healeth thee.§

6. All we like the sheep, have gone astray: He means to say, like sheep without a shepherd, therefore he says, like *the* sheep, with a patach under the caph to denote|| the definite article, for it is the stray sheep that has no shepherd.—Hath laid, (or, caused to fall:) It is the punishment which falls on them, and it is God who causes (it) to fall, for he sends the evil on them. The meaning of עֶרָ is, punishment of iniquity; as—for the punishment¶ of the Amorites is not yet full.

* Amos i. 6, 9.

† Kimchi considers the original as expressive of *completeness*.

‡ Exod. xxi. 25.

§ Exod. xv. 26.

|| Lit., for.

¶ Gen. xv. 16. The meaning of עֶרָ in this passage is most probably iniquity, as our translators have rendered it. Yet there can be no doubt that the word is often employed in the sense of punishment, distress, as the best critics and lexicographers have shown. It

7. It was exacted,* and he was afflicted: It was exacted in money: like—he exacted the silver—he shall not exact of his neighbors.† He was afflicted: in body, for they afflicted his body with stripes. And notwithstanding‡ he did not open his mouth. He was not permitted to cry and to murmur on account of what we were doing to him, but was like a lamb that they lead to slaughter, that doth not open its mouth, and doth not cry, or like the sheep that is dumb before its shearers. And the comparison of the lamb refers to him humble in body and to his innocence; and the comparison of the sheep refers to exaction of the money, which is—according to the comparison—the fleece. And he compares him to a רכל and not to a כבש, on account of its greater weakness,§ for in all species (of animals,) the female is weaker than the male: thus Israel in the captivity, were exceedingly weak. נאלמה,

is thus used in Ps. xxxi. 11, (10:) “my strength faileth, because of my *punishment* or *grief*,” and in 2 Sam. xvi. 12, “it may be that the Lord will look on mine *affliction*.” And in this sense it ought to be understood in Ps. xl. 13, (12,) as the connection and parallelism evince: “innumerable evils have compassed me about;—my *distresses* have taken hold upon me.” Thus, one objection to understanding this Psalm of the Messiah is removed.

* He was oppressed. Eng. Trans.

† 2 Kings xxiii. 35. Deut. xv. 2.

‡ Lit. with all this.

§ The former word denotes properly a female sheep that is a mother, and the latter a sheep a year old and upwards. Gesen.

is dumb : it is milel,* and preterite Niphal. And he doth not open his mouth ; neither on account of the body (afflicted) nor the money (exacted.) †

8. From oppression :‡ From the oppression of the captives who were oppressed there, and from the sentence of the prisoners which the judges passed on them : he was taken away and delivered from all this.—And his generation who would declare ? who would have said that his generation should be so great !§ And it is like—who would have said unto Abraham. ||—יְשׁוּעָה

* This is a Chaldee term denoting that the word is accented on the penultima.

† When the reader calls to mind the intolerable exactions practised on the richer Jews in the middle ages, and the most iniquitous persecutions to which they were subjected ; he will not be surprised, that their commentators should apply such passages as the above to outrages, of which they were the unhappy witnesses, if not the miserable victims.

‡ The English translation is “from prison ;” but that of Kimchi is far better. The former involves the Christian exposition, which explains the whole chapter of the Messiah, in some difficulty, whilst the latter is entirely in harmony with it. The word is used for oppression, trouble, in Ps. cvii. 39 : “brought low through *oppression*.” The next word, rendered “judgment” most probably means, judicial sentence, as in 2 Kings xxv. 6, “they gave *judgment* upon him.” The preposition is not unfrequently used in the sense of *by*, as in Gen. ix. 11, “*by* the waters of a flood,” Job vii. 14, “*by* dreams, *by* visions.” The verb is used of dying, whether by a violent death or otherwise. If then we allow a hendiadys in the first part of the verse, the translation will be as follows : “by an oppressive sentence he was taken off.”—The correctness of the application to Jesus, the true Messiah, needs no illustration.

§ Lit., to such a degree in greatness.

|| Gen. xxi. 7.

has the sense of speaking: as*—of the work of thy hands, I will speak.† And they are of the quadrilateral form of verbs quiescent ain.‡—For he was cut off from the land of the living; when he went into captivity from his land, which is called the land of the living, as—I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living:§ and how should we have supposed that he would have attained such greatness?—For the transgression of my people: every nation will say thus, that on account of its transgression the stroke had come on them, not on account of their own transgression.

9. And he gave.|| They put him to death—in the captivity, as they put to death the wicked on account of their wickedness, and (yet) he did no violence, and did not speak deceit with his mouth; and they put him to death, as if he had done evil, and they oppressed him with the wicked. And the meaning of, and he gave, (is,) that he delivered up himself to death; for they would have liberated him, if he would have denied his law and turned to their law. But he delivered himself to death, and would not deny his law; and thus it says, for thy sake are we killed all the day.¶ And the meaning of—and with the rich in

* Lit., and thus.

† Ps. cxliii. 5. Our English translation has, “I will muse.”

‡ That is, the middle radical *vau* is quiescent.

§ Ps. cxvi. 9.

|| And he made. Eng. Trans.

¶ Ps. xlv. 22.

his death—(is this,) that indeed he enriched those that put him to death on account of his riches, and he was put to death not on account of wickedness which was in him, but on account of riches which he possessed. And (as to) the meaning of **במִוְתָיו** : the word is plural, for they inflicted on them many (various) deaths ; some of them were burned, and some of them were slain with the sword, and some of them were stoned ; and they deliver themselves up to all (kinds of death,) on account of the unity of God.

10. And the Lord was pleased to bruise him ; he hath put him to grief : In his sorrows and in his distresses in the captivity, we only see, God was pleased ; for he adhered to his law which is the law of truth, and he delivered himself up on account of it. Since (it was) thus, we see no reason for his sorrows, but, either he was seized on account of his iniquities, or, God was pleased thus to bruise him, and to put him to grief : and the pleasure of God we do not know.* **וְהָזָלִי**, aleph, which is the last radical of the verb, is wanting, and it is called (or read) like verbs in aleph, although the root is most frequently with He.—**אִם** 'וְגַר' ; If his soul shall make a trespass offering : But this we see, that a good recompense is (given) to him on account of the evil which he bore ; and

* That is, we cannot fully comprehend the motives which led him thus to act.

since his soul (or life) put itself in the place of a trespass offering, as he says—with the wicked—now he shall see great posterity : as the prophet Zechariah says respecting them—they shall increase as they have increased ; and he says, I will bring them into the land of Gilead and Lebanon, and (place) shall not be found for them.* And Ezekiel says, I will increase them (with) men like a flock.†—He shall prolong his days : as it is said in this book, like the days of a tree are the days of my people ;‡ and the prophet Zechariah says, and every man with his staff in his hand for great age.§—“And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand :” Behold, in the captivity, it was the pleasure of the Lord, to bruise him ; but the recompense is this, it shall prosper in his hand ; God was pleased to increase him, and to benefit him exceedingly.

11. Thus far (we have) the words of the nations : hereafter the words of God.--Of the trouble of his soul : (that) which he bore in the captivity, he shall have a retribution, because he shall see and be satisfied ; that is, he shall see good with which he shall be satisfied.—By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify (or make righteous) many : My servant, that is, Israel, as we have said in the beginning of this section. And

* x. 8, 10.

† lxxv. 22.

† Ezek. xxxvi. 37.

§ viii. 4.

the exposition of, by his knowledge, corresponds with what is written, that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,* and it is written that they shall all know me :† and behold, my servant Israel, who was righteous and knew the Lord, shall make many nations righteous by his knowledge ; as it is written, and many nations shall come and say, come and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his way and so forth.‡—And he will bear their iniquities : He, by his righteousness, will bear (away) the iniquities of the nations, for by his righteousness peace and happiness shall prevail in the world, even among the nations.

12. Therefore will I divide to him among many : Many and strong ; these are Gog and Magog, and the nations that will come with them against Jerusalem, as the prophet Zechariah says : and the wealth of all the heathen round about shall be gathered together, gold, silver, and apparel in great abundance.§ And this shall be his recompense, because he poured out his life unto death ; since he delivered up himself unto death by the hand of the nations in the captivity, he shall have all this glory, and their money shall be instead of his money which they took, and

* Isa. xi. 9.

† Isa. ii. 3, or Mic. iv. 2.

‡ Jer. xxxi. 34.

§ xiv. 14.

their life instead of the life of him whom they put to death there ; all the wealth of Gog and Magog, as it is written. 'הַעֲרָה, he poured out his life to death ; and thus, she poured out (emptied) her pitcher ;* it has the meaning of pouring out, but the form of the word is different.—And he was numbered with the transgressors ; as we have explained (the clause), and he gave with the wicked his grave. And he bore the sin of many ; it may be explained of the captivity ; and he means (by) sin of many, that which the nations sinned against him, and he bore and carried their distress. And this is like,† and the sin (is in) thine own people.‡ And he made intercession for the transgressors : And although he thus supplicated on account of the transgressors who had transgressed against him, and he was sought by them to bless their country ; as it says, and seek the peace of the city whither I have carried you away captive and so forth.§ And thus (it is used) in Hiphil,|| in the meaning of supplication and seeking—made intercession to the king,¶ and—wondered that there was no intercessor.**

This section may also be explained in reference to the time of the redemption, and the interpretation will be as we have interpreted (the

* Gen. xxiv. 20.

† Lit., according to the way of.

‡ Exod. v. 16.

§ Jer. xxix. 7.

|| Lit., and like it of the grave conjugation.

¶ Jer. xxxvi. 25.

** Isa. lix. 16.

words)—and their iniquities he will bear. And (some of) our Rabbies explained it respecting Moses our master, on whom be peace, and they said: because he poured out his life unto death, (that is) since he delivered himself up to death, as it is said, and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.* And he was numbered with the transgressors, because he was numbered with those who died in the wilderness. And he bore the sin of many, because he made atonement on account of the work of the calf. And he made intercession for the transgressors, because he sought mercies on account of the transgressions of Israel.—But Jonathan interprets **הנה ישכיל עבדי** thus: my servant Messiah shall prosper: and he explains **כאשר שממו** (thus:) as the house of Israel waited for him and so forth.

* Exod. xxxii. 32.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI ABEN EZRA,
ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

AND behold my servant shall understand. This section is very difficult. Our opponents* say, that it refers to their God, and they explain—my servant—of the body.† But this is unfounded, for—shall understand—cannot be said of the body, even although the man were living. And further, what will be the meaning of—shall see seed, shall prolong days—while of the former he had none, and the latter is inapplicable to him! And further—he shall divide the prey with the strong. And the proof is complete, for (it is said) previously, that the Lord will go before them,‡ meaning Israel, and afterwards—sing, O barren,§

* He means the Christians.

† Aben Ezra appears to use this term to express our Lord's human nature, and to have had very indistinct ideas of the doctrine of the incarnation. Christians never predicated intelligence of the body of Christ, but of his soul. Even those sectaries who held that the Logos took the place of the soul, did not maintain the absurdity here implied.

‡ lii. 12.

§ liv. 1.

meaning the congregation of Israel.* And observe—my servant—means every (or any) Israelite in the captivity ; and he is the Lord's servant. Many also explain it of the Messiah, on account of what our forefathers of blessed memory said, that on the day when the house of the sanctuary was destroyed, Messiah was born, and bound in fetters. But observe (that, in this case,) many verses would be without meaning ; namely—he was despised and rejected by men†—he was taken from prison and from judgment—and he gave with the wicked his grave : and what (then will be) the sense of—he will see seed—he will prolong days ? And the Gaon, Rabbi Saadiah, whose memory be blessed, beautifully interprets the whole section of Jeremiah. Thus, the words,

* Aben Ezra's objections are easily answered. The seed or posterity mentioned, are not natural but spiritual progeny, and the length of days is the everlasting life of the exalted Messiah in heaven. The division of the prey is figurative of the happy result of conquest. He acknowledges that interpreters in general had given such a figurative interpretation. See him on v. 12, and the note there. And although the section does stand in connection with prophecies relating to Israel, both preceding and following, yet it is natural and according to Isaiah's manner, to introduce the Messiah either speaking or spoken of, inasmuch as he is intimately connected with the true Israel.

† Or, ceasing to be of men, as he afterwards explains it. These expressions to which the wise Rabbi Abraham can attach no meaning if applied to the Messiah, are sufficiently plain to any one who remembers that the prophecies of the Old Testament represent him as a man, subjected to humiliation, disgrace, and death, preparatory to his exaltation to universal supremacy.

he will sprinkle many nations, will mean—by his mouth, in the course of his prophecy. Also he (Jeremiah) writes in the beginning of his book, as (if he were) a suckling before him; for he was young when he prophesied.* And the Lord caused to meet on him—and he bare the sin of many : for thus he writes: remember that I stood before thee to ask good for them.†—Like a lamb to the slaughter he is brought: and thus he writes—but I (was) like a lamb, (or) an ox (that) is brought to the slaughter.‡ And the words—he shall divide the spoil with the strong—may be explained in reference to the portion of food and the reward which the captain of the guard gave him.§ Still however,|| it is evident to me that there is an intimate connection in this portion (of Isaiah's prophecy); and what reason can be assigned for introducing Jeremiah in the midst of consolations preceding and following? And ob-

* Aben Ezra alludes to Jer. i. 6, at the same time accommodating the words of Isaiah in liii. 2. He means, of course, when Jeremiah began to prophesy.

† xviii. 20. The Hebrew is, to speak good; and thus also our English Translation. It is possible that Aben Ezra may have confounded with this text Jer. xxix. 7 "*seek the peace of the city.*"

‡ xi. 19.

§ xl. 5. The perversion of such a text as this of Isaiah to a circumstance so trivial as that referred to in the life of Jeremiah, is a melancholy proof of the effect of prejudice in degrading the intellect. Candor compels the admission that such degradation is not limited to Jewish expositors.

|| Lit., But.

serve, he speaks of any servant of the Lord who is in the captivity; or—my servant—is equivalent to—Israel my servant: the latter view is the more accurate.*

LII. 13. And behold my servant יִשְׁכִּיָּל shall understand; for he will yet be exalted and raised up: נִישָׂא is Niphal.

14. As (many) were astonished at thee: like—and your enemies shall be astonished at it; † and the sense is, that every one who shall see the servant of the Lord shall be astonished; and the word—many—refers to the nations; ‡ and—so—is equivalent to, so it was. §

14. So deformed than man: מְשֻׁחָת is an adjective (or concrete,) and תֹּאֲרָר is of the same form as רָחַבְרָר. And this (that the prophet here states) is a matter well known: for how many nations are there in the world who think that the Jew's form (appearance,) is different from (that of) all others, and enquire whether a Jew has a mouth or an eye. Thus in the country of Ishmael and of Edom.

15. So shall he sprinkle: This conveys the same idea as shall be exalted and elevated. As

* Lit., and this is nearer than that; that is, it approaches more closely to the prophet's idea.

† Levit. xxvi. 32.

‡ Lit., the meaning of many (is) the nations.

§ Lit., the meaning of so is as if he had said, *he was so*.

|| Lit., goes according to the way of.

our people were in such a condition,* that their appearance was deformed in the eyes of beholders, so there shall come a time when they will be avenged on them: shall sprinkle being equivalent to shall pour out their blood.† The kings shall

* Lit., as our nation was thus.

† With this brief, though quite intelligible language of Aben Ezra, let the reader compare the following passages from the Popular Lectures on the Prophecies relative to the Jewish nation, by the Rev. Hugh M'Neile, M. A., Lond. 1838. "It is copiously predicted, that the cup of the Lord's anger shall continue in the hands of the Jews until the time appointed of the Lord, not merely to take it out of their hand, but also to transfer it into the hands of those who, till then, will have oppressed them. Edom, the Assyrian, and Babylon, were the great types of all the subsequent enemies of the chosen nation, whether Romans, Turks, or professing Christians. The day of Jerusalem's recovery is the day of their ruin. In that day, *it will be a righteous thing in the servants of the Lord to execute unsparing destruction upon his and their enemies.*—The Hebrews are now kept in dispersion and degradation till the iniquities of the modern mystical Edom and Babylon shall be full, and *then fury shall be poured forth, and vengeance executed both by their own hands, as in the case of Joshua's exterminating conquests*, and by a greater hand than theirs, stretched out to fight for them." Lect. 11. p. 69, 70.

It is evident that by enthusiastic and gloomy devotees, such representations might be employed in defence of any imaginable degree of fanatical butchery. To those, however, who believe, that the restoration of the Jews to God will rather illustrate the character of the true Messiah as him who "shall speak *peace unto the Heathen*,"* it is a consolation to think, that these sentiments of the popular lecturer will hardly do much mischief, as it is not probable that they will ever be practically verified. As for our Rabbi, happily he wrote in a language not understood by his Christian superiors, who, if they could have read his commentary, would probably have made him pay dearly for his exposition.

* Zech. ix. 10.

shut their mouths : and indeed—at him, that is, on account of him.—What had not been told them shall they see : what had not entered into the heart of the nations, (namely,) that Israel should be delivered.

LIII. 1. Who : then the nations will say, who believed ? who was there that believed that it should be according to this report which we heard ? And the arm of the Lord to whom was it revealed ? (that is,) of old, as it hath been revealed to these ?

1. And shall grow up : and lo, whatever Israelite serves the Lord—or, all Israel—grows up before the blessed Lord, like a tender plant or (branch ;) like—his branches shall spread.*—And as a root out of a dry ground : which neither produces fruit nor becomes large.—He hath no form : this is to be explained like—and his form (was more deformed) than the sons of men.—And (when) we shall see him, (there is) no beauty ; the negative† qualifies the word with which it is connected, and also the clause that follows‡ : and thus he was, and we did not desire him. It is like : a gift in secret pacifieth anger.§

* Hos. xiv. 7. (6.)

† See note §. p. 121.

‡ Lit., qualifies itself (or, its substance,) and another with it.

§ Prov. xxi. 14. It is particularly worthy of attention, that the Jewish commentators presume as a matter of course, that every reader of their works is familiar with the Old Testament. Hence it is, that they frequently illustrate a passage by imperfectly quoting a similar one, leaving the omitted portion to be supplied by the memory.

3. He was despised and ceased (to be) of

The lesson that this conveys to Christians, and to not a few Christian ministers, I need not state. The intelligent Jew of the middle ages read his Hebrew Bible, purchased in manuscript at a great price or written out by himself with much labor, without the aid of either dictionary or concordance, and read it so often that he became well acquainted with its contents, and even with its phraseology, so that the citing of a few words suggested to his mind the whole context. We have a striking illustration of this method of quoting in the text. In order to perceive the applicability of the passage in Proverbs to the case in hand, namely, that the negative particle qualifies two things, it is necessary to attend to the latter half of the verse, which runs thus: "and a reward in the bosom strong wrath." The one word "*pacifieth*" qualifies both clauses of the sentence. The reader will not fail to observe several of these imperfect quotations in these selections, to which I add from Maimonides, in his Treatise on Repentance, two remarkable instances. In chap. vii. sect 8, where he is speaking of the prayer of impenitent sinners being disregarded by God, he cites a part of Isa. i. 15, the omitted portion, however, being essential to the idea intended to be conveyed: "the man who (in his impenitent state,) was not answered, as it is said, yea, when ye make many prayers and so forth." The omitted words, "I will not hear," must be supplied. And again, chap. x. sect. 4, when speaking of love to God as the motive to study his law, he remarks: "the wise men say again, (he had just before referred to other declarations of theirs,) delighteth greatly in his commandments." The last words, which are cited also in the same connection in the Talmud, is an imperfect quotation from Ps. xii. 1, the former part of the verse—"blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, that"—being necessary to give meaning to the whole. One of the most striking examples that I have met with of this method of quoting or referring to a passage, is in the commentary of Aben Ezra on Zech. iii. 2; "is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" The Hebrew for *is not* is הֲלֹא, and it stands at the commencement of the clause; on which the commentator remarks, "and the sense of הֲלֹא is allegorical," meaning, the whole passage is so. And in the same way, does the author of the epistle to the Hebrews express himself in xii. 27, immediately after he had quoted

men* : he ceased to be reckoned among men.†—
A man of sorrows : (meaning,) the servant of the
Lord. And if (it is intended) of the whole (body,)
the sense of—man—is like—man of war‡ : and it
approximates to the pronunciation (or form) of
מַלְחָמָה, and is construct. The expression—sor-
row and grief (or, sickness—denotes) the afflic-
tion of the captivity.—And as what we hide the
face from|| : There are people even in the present
day, who, when they see a Jew, will hide their
faces from him : and the meaning is, (or, the rea-
son is, because) they will not look at him to de-
liver him.

from Hag. ii. 6, “yet once I shake not the earth only but also the
heaven :” “and this, yet once, signifieth and so forth,” that is, the
whole clause of the prophet, beginning with this phrase, expresses
the subject to which the apostle applies it. Our translation obscures
the sense, by adding to the original the term *word*.—Peculiarities in
the mode of quotation in the New Testament, whether they relate
to the language or the sense, may almost always be illustrated by
reference to Jewish writings.

* “Rejected of men.” Eng. Trans.

† Comp. Ps. xxii. 7. (6.) “But I am a worm and no man.”

‡ I presume Aben Ezra means to say, that the singular noun
which is employed in the original, is used collectively. In Isa. iii. 2,
and Ezek. xxxix. 20, the word is doubtless susceptible of such a sense.
But even there it evidently may denote an individual. Still it is well
known, that singular nouns are often understood collectively.

§ The author probably means, that the original word מַלְחָמָה, from
which comes מַלְחָמָה, is somewhat similar in its vowel sounds, or in
its form to מַלְחָמָה.—If the language, *brevis esse laboro, obscurus fio*,
is applicable to any writer, it is most especially so to Aben Ezra.

|| “And we hid as it were our faces from him.” Eng. Trans.

4. But:* the chief point† of the verse, (or, the beginning of the portion,) is this; we were afflicting, (or, making sick,) and he was bearing. Our sorrows:—those by which we caused him to sorrow—he was sustaining, and we supposed that he was *smitten*, נָגַע : from the same root as—and behold the *plague* is at a stand in his sight.‡—Smitten of God: construct (meaning,) whom the Lord hath smitten and afflicted. The proof that the sickness ought to come on us is clear, because our law or (religion,§) is wholly vain, and they have come on Israel, whose law is the law of truth: and the proof (is in the admission§,) all we like sheep have gone astray.

5. But he was wounded: from the root חָלַל. And the chastisement which shall perpetuate our peace, even it (was) on him: the proof (of which is in the words,) and by his stripes we are healed. And the meaning of wounded (is this:) that the Lord will visit the nations because they distress-

* “Surely.” Eng. Trans.

† The original is נָגַע which bears either of the senses given above. In favor of the latter it may be remarked, that on the 9th verse, the Rabbi uses the phrase בְּאַחֲרֵיכֶם afterwards or at last, which may be antithetic to נָגַע, the first or beginning. He may intend to say, that at first Isaiah simply represents the nations as afflicting and the Jews as bearing; but afterwards he represents the nations as recognising the truth, that the afflictions of the Jews were beneficial to themselves.

‡ Levit. xiii. 5. The Hebrew reader need not be reminded that the words *smitten* and *plague* are of the same root.

§ Meaning, that of the nations, in whose person the author supposes the prophet to be speaking.

ed Israel; and thus the Targum of Jonathan on—and I will cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed.* And the meaning of—the chastisement of our peace—(is this :) It is well known that during the whole period of Israel's distress in the captivity, there shall also be peace to the nations. Dost thou not perceive that it is written respecting the time of the deliverance—and there shall be a time of trouble?† and again, it is written, when the angel replied that all the earth sitteth still, and is at rest, and the angel answered, how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem?‡ The meaning is, that during the whole period of rest to the nations, thou wilt not have mercy on Jerusalem.

All we : At last they will recognize the truth. And observe (that) this is intimately connected with—stricken, smitten of God; and it is like (what we read elsewhere,) our fathers have inherited lies.§—Caused to meet (or light :||) from the same root as—and he lighted on a place.¶—עַרְךָ

* Joel iv. (iii.) 21. The Targum is : I will avenge their blood on the nations. But it is difficult to see what bearing this can have on the meaning of wounded in the text, or on anything that can possibly be implied.

† Dan xii. 1.

‡ Zech. i. 11, 12.

§ Jer. xvi. 19. The reader will bear in mind that Jeremiah puts this language in the mouth of Gentiles. He will remember too that Kimchi speaks of this supposed sentiment of the Gentiles as erroneous.

|| Hath laid. Eng. Trans.

¶ Gen. xxviii. 11. In both texts the original word is the same.

is here equivalent to punishment ; as—there shall no punishment happen unto thee—for the punishment of the Amorites is not full—and the punishment of the daughter of my people is great.*—But some compare it with†—and do not make intercession to me—and say, that the exposition of the עֵץ of us all, should be according to its literal sense,‡ and that the meaning is, he will intercede in order that there may be peace to the world, agreeably to (what we read,)—and seek the peace of the city.§ The word עֵץ will however be in harsh construction|| with הפגיע בר.

7. נָגַשׁ is in Niphal. Yet he opened not his mouth. This requires no explanation, for every Jew in the captivity is in this situation : for in the time of his affliction he will not open his mouth to speak ; how much less the righteous man among them, who will not devote himself to the world, but to the service of God, and will not flatter¶ prince or great man, in order that he may stand up for him in the breach when man rises up against him.—And he will not open his mouth ; meaning, at any time.

* 1 Sam. xxviii. 10. Gen. xv. 16. Lam. iv. 6. Compare note ¶ on p. 125.

† Lit., there are some who say it is derived from. Jer. vii. 16, where in the original the word is the same.

‡ That is, iniquity.

§ Jer. xxix. 7.

|| Lit., go hard. He means, if it be understood in the sense of iniquity.

¶ Lit., know, recognize.

8. From prison : Now behold the Lord delivers Israel and the truth* of the righteous ones of Israel.—He was taken : The Lord took him from prison, him who had been imprisoned by a judgment, a vindictive judgment.—And his generation who shall declare ? like—or speak (declare) to the earth and it shall teach thee : † it means, who was there that told the men of his generation that it should be thus ? and he was long ago : ‡ as (it is said) he was cut off out of the land of the living. For the transgression of my people : (These are) the words of every nation (who will say) this, that the stroke which fell upon Israel was on account of our transgressions : as—he was wounded for our transgressions ; and this is undoubtedly the meaning, and for the transgression of my people the stroke will come upon them : for the word לָמַר is equivalent to לָהֶם. §

9. And he (or they) gave : Some explain this of those among the captives who died, and some

* The Hebrew is אֱמֶת. If pointed thus, אֱמֶת, it means *the truth*, and most probably refers to their fidelity or true religious character ; but if pointed thus, אֲמֶת, it will signify *the nations*. I prefer the former punctuation, as the latter word can hardly be used to express the Jewish people.

† Job xii. 8.

‡ I do not understand this. The Hebrew is וְהוּא כְּבֵר הָיָה, which may be rendered, *and it was long ago*, or, *though it has been for a long time*.

§ That is, the prophet uses the one word for the other, because they are of the same meaning, the former being more poetical.

say, that the word **במותיו** (in his death,) is from the same root as—and thou shalt tread upon **במותימו** (their high places,) and that it refers to the mausoleum,* thus making it expressive of—his grave.—And with the rich, **עשיר**; equivalent to the wicked, **רשעים**: and the meaning is, the nations, who are rich in comparison with Israel. It is evident to me, that the sense of the verse (is this,) that during the whole period in which Israel was distressed in the captivity, he was willing to die with the nations; as (Samson says,) let me die with the Philistines.† And the scripture says—and he gave—referring to his will; like what is said of Balak, and he warred‡ against Israel. And the evidence that this relates to the greatness of the distress is what is said (immediately afterwards,) because he had done no violence. For the nations will distress Israel without cause, and not on account of (any) act which they had committed, or evil word that they had spoken. The interpretation may comprehend both the views given.§ And if it be objected, is it not **במות**?|| (the punctuation) is not changed in the

* Lit., the building which is over the grave.

† Judges xvi. 30.

‡ Meaning, it was his wish and effort to make war. Josh. xxiv. 9.

§ Lit., for it may be explained in reference to both subjects (or forms.) That is, it may comprehend death and mausoleum both, according to the punctuations in **במותיו** and **במותימו**.

|| That is, the Beth is pointed with Sheva, and not, as in the other word, with Kametz.

expression על במותיו,* and why is it changed in the word במותיו? it may be replied, that this word has two forms,† as—eunuchs of Pharaoh—and—eunuchs of the king.‡

10. And the Lord was pleased to bruise him: (in form) like—to speak peaceably unto him;§ of the piel conjugation, with dagesh.—החלי. He hath put him to grief, (or made him sick :) of (verbs) in He. It follows the form of (those in) Aleph; and we find also—its sicknesses (תחלואיה) with which the Lord hath made it sick, (חלה. ||) And behold, he was pleased to bruise him; to chastise him in the captivity.—When his soul will make an offering for sin; the fear of the Lord will be upon him.¶ He shall see children and prolong days; for he shall see, he and his children, the salvation (deliverance,) of the Lord. And observe, he is speaking of that generation which will be

* He means the punctuation here is not altered, the Beth does not change its Kametz into Sheva.

† Lit., goes according to two analogies.

‡ Gen. xl. 7; Esther vi. 14. The English translation in the latter passage has “chamberlains,” but the Hebrew word in both places is the same except that the one has Sheva and the other Kametz, thus making the two forms referred to. On account of this difference Aben Ezra cites the words as analogous to the two under consideration.

§ Gen. xxxvii. 4. He means that the form of תפא in Isaiah is like תבר in Genesis.

|| Deut. xxix. 21. (22.)

¶ That is, he will be under the influence of true religion.

converted to the Lord, to the law of the Lord, when the time arrives, the coming of the Messiah. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand: this relates to religion, (and it means,) that the nations shall be converted to the law of the Lord.

11. Of the travail, (labor :) It means the reward which he shall receive on account of what he hath borne. He shall see his desire; or, he shall see good until he is satisfied; because by his knowledge he will make many righteous; and these are the nations whom Israel will teach to keep the law. And the meaning of—he shall bear their iniquities—is, that Israel shall partake* of the distress of the nations on account of the multitude of their iniquities; not as they acted towards Israel.† Or else the meaning is, that they (Israel) would intercede with God on account of the nations, according to the meaning of—and if the family of Egypt go not up.‡ This is evident to me, for it is proved by the subsequent verse.

12. Therefore: All the interpreters say that

* Lit., be associated with.

† That is, the nations did not participate in or sympathize with Israel's distress.

‡ Zech. xiv. 18. This is an imperfect quotation. The author appears to have in mind the punishment threatened against such as shall refuse to go up to Jerusalem to worship the Lord, to avert which Israel is supposed to intercede. See the context in Zechariah.

this verse is figurative, and relates to those who died on account of (the doctrine of) God's unity ; and that the term many (רבים) is equivalent to great, (גדולים,) as—to every great man* of his house—and refers to the prophets, and—the strong—to the fathers: and (thus) the meaning will be, that the portion of those who have died on account of the unity will be with the prophets. Now we know that this thing is (indeed) true, but (the exposition) does not accord with the meaning of the section.† It is evident to me, that the sense is this : therefore I will give to Israel a portion, spoil and plunder of many nations ; and from the strong, like—as soon as I go out from the city.‡ On account of this (he shall have) a reward, because he poured out his soul to death. Some say that it corresponds with גלה and denotes publicity.§ But

* Esther i. 8. The English translation is—"to all the officers;" but the version of Aben Ezra is much nearer the Hebrew, which is על כל-רב.

† I presume the author means, that, as the section in general describes literally the distress of Israel, the language by which the subsequent happiness and reward are described ought also to be understood literally, and therefore must not be explained simply of a future spiritual reward. It is important, however, to note his admission, that commentators had generally so understood it, inasmuch as this figurative meaning developing a spiritual reward, is the only one which accords with the Christian interpretation.

‡ Exod. ix. 29. This reference is to show, that את has the force of a preposition, and means from.

§ He means, that some interpreters explain ערה in this place to make bare, expose, like גלה, to reward, disclose, uncover.

it is plain to me that it is like—and she poured out her pitcher,* though the forms are different: and evidence (may be found in the text)—pour not out my soul,† in the same meaning as שֹׁפֵךְ.—וְאֵת means the same as וְעִם and with.—Transgressors, because they transgressed against the Lord: thus were Israel accounted.—And he bare the sin of many: for their distress procured peace, (happiness,) for all the nations, and the sin which they should have borne was borne by Israel.—And for the transgressors: on account of the transgressors he interceded with the Lord, agreeably to—seek the peace of the city.‡ The expression—for the transgressors—is to be explained of the nations.

I have thus interpreted to thee the whole section. And in my opinion, the expression, behold my servant shall understand, refers to him of whom the prophet says, behold, my servant, I will uphold him,—and he said to me, thou art my servant.§ And so it is written—by his knowledge shall my righteous servant make many righteous: and it is written, I gave my back to the smiters.||—And the deep sense is as I have

* Gen. xxiv. 20.

† Ps. cxli. 8. In our English translation—"leave not my soul destitute." But the Hebrew word is the same as that in Isaiah, and the translation of Aben Ezra is quite exact.

‡ Jer. xxix. 7.

§ Isa. xlii. 1. xlix. 3.

|| Isa. l. 6.

pointed out through half* of the book, and observe all the divisions are closely connected.

* Does he mean, through the latter half or portion of Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter to the end? The phrase,—servant of the Lord—occurs exclusively in this part of his prophecies.

TRANSLATION OF THE TARGUM ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

INTRODUCTION.

THE word Targum means interpretation, and is employed to designate certain translations or paraphrases of the Old Testament into Chaldee. In very ancient periods, the Bible was translated into the vernacular languages of Jews who lived out of Palestine, and had lost, either partially or wholly, their knowledge of Hebrew. The Septuagint was prepared for those who were accustomed to the use of Greek, and the Targums for such as had gradually substituted the Chaldee dialect for their own. The most celebrated of these paraphrastic translations are those of ONKELOS on the Pentateuch, and JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL on the prophets. In addition to the books to which we are accustomed to apply this term, the Jews comprehend under it Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. These they call the former prophets, in contradistinction to the others, denominated the later. According to the best Jewish accounts,

Onkelos flourished a short period before Christ, with whom Jonathan was nearly contemporaneous. Some critics have endeavored to prove that the translation ascribed to Jonathan is not of earlier date than the third or fourth century; and that the diversity of its style, in different places, shows it to be the work of several authors. But Gesenius, who has examined this subject with his accustomed accuracy, denies that this representation is well founded, and maintains that the asserted diversity of style is nothing more than the adaptation to different kinds of composition in the Hebrew Bible itself, whether historical, didactic, or poetical, judiciously made by the one translator; and that there is no good reason to deny the Targum the antiquity which the Jews ascribe to it. The substance of his remarks is as follows.

The reasons which have been alleged against the antiquity of this Targum, are not satisfactory. "Were it as old as its advocates maintain, (says Eichhorn,) it could not have been unknown to the fathers:—it contains fables which came into circulation in a later age:—it attempts to exclude the Messiah from the places which the Christians explained of him,* which proves that controversies against the Christians were not unusual at the time of its composition;—not to urge the consideration, that a Chaldee version was unnecessary

* Isa. liii; lxiii. 1—5.

at the period assigned to it." The first and last of these reasons carry their own refutation along with them: for the fathers in general had no knowledge of Jewish works, and the prevalency of the Chaldee dialect in the time of Christ shows that such translations, which were also interpretations, were then undoubtedly necessary. That the explanation of Isa. liii., lxiii. 1-5, which applies these places to the Messiah, is set aside, is utterly unfounded. In the former it is expressly given, and with the greatest arbitrariness; and if this is not the case as to the latter, the omission need not be attributed to any polemic influence, especially as it cannot be proved that the Christians attached extraordinary value to this passage as referring to the Messiah. At the same time, the Targumist agrees with the Christians in most of the other places which they explained of the Messiah, particularly chapters ix. xi. xlii. The introduction of the later Jewish fables would be a most serious difficulty, were it possible to show with any certainty the time of their origin. Morinus appeals to the name Armillus as applied to Antichrist in Isa. xi. 4. But the general idea of Antichrist is more ancient than the New Testament, and it cannot be proved that the name Armillus, the origin of which is unknown, must be so late. Until stronger evidence therefore is alleged for the contrary, I shall adhere to that designation of the age of this Targum which is

marked out by tradition : especially as the Chaldee is pure and like that of Onkelos ; the doctrine which it contains respecting the Messiah seems rather to be earlier than the New Testament than later ; and no definite trace of the government having been overthrown appears in it,* although the author has intermingled references to his own times.

With more certainty still may the unity of this Targum, which many late critics have denied, be defended. “The work (it is said,) is altogether unequal ; the historical books are translated pretty literally, but the poetical are paraphrased, and additional ideas often introduced. This shows the version to have been composed by various authors.” Not necessarily : for the author does certainly interpret the historical parts of the prophetic books, for the most part, simply and literally, while he paraphrases the poetical portions of the historical books, and explains the figures contained in them ; so that this supposed inequality rather seems to belong to his manner. In the degree in which he acts the paraphrast, he is not entirely uniform ; but it would be very unreasonable to ascribe the work on this account to various authors, since the same is true of the Septuagint. This want of uniformity is rather to be attributed to the

* The language in liii. 5, may as well be supposed to refer to the destruction of the temple by the Chaldeans as by the Romans.

inequality and variable manner of the translator. If some passages, which are probably interpolations, are excluded, I must maintain, that, even with the real varieties which appear in particular parts, the whole translation is the work of one author.

The learned writer then proceeds to examine the character of this version, which he exhibits in the following particulars :

1. This paraphrast often understands his text philologically and exegetically with perfect correctness, and expresses its meaning, especially in historical representations, with literal accuracy ; but when the language is figurative, he attempts, in his paraphrastic way, to elucidate it, either by explaining the figures or by introducing something additional.

2. But not unfrequently his exposition is entirely capricious. The grammatical interpretation is abandoned, the true meaning of the figures misconceived, and although the very words of the text may be repeated in the paraphrase, this is done in the most arbitrary connection, and sometimes with an overwhelming flood of fictitious trifling.

3. He retains for the most part the geographical names, like Onkelos, and but seldom substitutes the modern terms. When he does, however, he is often correct.

4. In common with many ancient translators,

the Alexandrine and Saadiah particularly, he willingly rejects those anthropopathic terms* and other expressions used of God, which might give offence. Both of them appear to him inconsistent with the dignity of God and of the sacred scriptures.

5. Another character of this version, as I have already intimated, is, the introduction of matter not in the text. Much more abundantly than the Alexandrine translator, Jonathan arbitrarily introduces into his paraphrase views which belong to a period later than that of his author; also Rabbinical sayings and Jewish theology of his own time, and often in such a way as to show but too plainly the Rabbi of the Pharisees and the learned scribe.

Under this last head, Gesenius remarks, as follows. The Targumist explains "the servant of God" in Isa. xlii. 1, exactly like Matthew in xii. 17–21; showing, that he regarded this place as prophetic of a Messiah, who should be the comforter of the poor, and the instructor of the heathen. And in the same way does he explain it in xliii. 10; while, in other places, he interprets it of the people, and often in the same section. So especially, in the celebrated passage lii. 13–liiii., where what is said of the distressed state of the servant of God, is referred to the people, and what

* That is, language used in relation to the Deity, which is founded on human analogies.

is announced respecting his elevation, or at least what he thus considers, is applied to the Messiah. In his doctrine, from the reception of which results happiness, and in the intercession for the people which is ascribed to him, we have evidently the prophetic and high priestly offices, which, together with the kingly, the Jews thus attached to the character of the Messiah, and which, in the epistle to the Hebrews, we find committed to Christ.—The importance of these statements consists in this: they prove that the views of the Talmudist, and, we may say, of the better class of Jews of his age, on these points, are entirely coincident with Christian doctrine; and consequently, that later Jewish expositions wholly different, are an abandonment of the old, orthodox exposition.

These characteristics are all illustrated by ample references, and in such a way as to show that the author has examined the subject with great care and industry. The original German may be found in the introduction to his commentary on Isaiah, sect. 11, p. 65–80; and an English Translation, in a volume entitled, *Essays and Dissertations in Biblical Literature*, by a Society of Clergymen, published by G. & C. & H. CARVILL, New York, 1829, 8vo. p. 412–426.

The Targums of Onkelos and Jonathan are exceedingly important in the controversy between the Jews and Christians. The reader may find

a list of places in the old Testament, explained of the Messiah by these very ancient Jewish interpreters, in Buxtorf's Talmudic Lexicon, under that word, col. 1268-1273.

TARGUM OF JONATHAN BEN UZZIEL
ON ISAIAH LII. 13—LIII.

LII. 13. BEHOLD, my servant, Messiah, shall prosper; he shall be exalted, and become great, and be very strong.

14. As the house of Israel expected him many days, who was mean among the nations ;—their appearance and their splendor compared with those of* the children of men.

15. So shall he scatter many nations, on account of him kings shall be silent, they shall put their hands upon their mouth, because what they did not tell them have they seen, and what they did not hear have they understood.

LIII. 1. Who hath believed this our report, and the strength of the arm of the power of the Lord, now to whom hath it bèn revealed ?

2. And the righteous one† shall be magnified

* Lit., than.

† The word in the original is in the singular number.

before him, lo, like suckers which flourish, and like a tree which casteth forth its roots along the streams of water, thus the holy one shall increase in the land which had need of him. His appearance will not be a common appearance, and his fear* not the fear of an ordinary man, but his splendor will be holy splendor, so that every one who shall see him will contemplate him, (or regard him with attention.)

3. Therefore he will be for contempt, and (or but) he will destroy the glory of all kings. They will be weak and afflicted, lo, like a man of sorrows and destined to sicknesses (or infirmities,) and when the face of majesty (shekinah,) was withdrawn from us, we were despised and not regarded.

4. Therefore on account of our sins will he supplicate, and our iniquities shall be pardoned for his sake, and we were regarded as bruised, smitten from before (by) the Lord and afflicted.

5. And he will build the house of the sanctuary, which was profaned on account of our sins, was delivered up on account of our iniquities, and by his doctrine peace shall be increased on us, and when we shall obey his word, our sins shall be pardoned us.

6. All we like sheep have been scattered, we

* That is, the fear which he will excite; as in Ps. xc. 10—"according to thy fear"—may mean, according to the reverence with which men regard thee.

have departed each one towards his way, and it pleased the Lord* to pardon the sins of us all on his account.

7. He prayed and was answered, and before he opened his mouth he was accepted. He will deliver up the strong of the nations like a lamb for a victim, and like a sheep which is dumb before its shearers, and in his presence there is none that speaketh a word.

8. From chastisements and retribution, (or punishment,) he will bring near our captivity, and the wonders which shall be done for us in his days, who is able to recount? for he will take away the dominion of the nations from the land of Israel; sins which my people were guilty of shall extend to (that is, affect) them.

9. And he will deliver up the wicked to hell, and the rich in substance who acted violently with destructive death;† that they who commit sin may not live, neither speak deceit‡ with their mouths.

10. And it was the pleasure of the Lord to melt and to purge the remnant of his people, in order to purify their souls from sins: they shall see the kingdom of their Messiah, they shall increase sons and daughters, they shall prolong

* Lit, and from before the Lord there was pleasure.

† That is, who inflicted violent death.

‡ Buxtorf, followed by Walton, reads נבליו, deceits; the Bomberg Bible and others נבליו, follies.

their days, and, doing the law of the Lord, by his pleasure they shall prosper.

11. From subjection to the nations he will free their souls ; they shall see the punishment of their enemies ;* they shall be satisfied with the plunder of their kings. By his wisdom he will purify the pure, (or justify the just,) in order to subject many to the law, and on account of their sins he will supplicate.

12. Therefore will I divide to him the plunder of many nations, and the wealth of strong fortified places : he shall divide the booty, because he delivered up his soul to death, and subjected the rebels to the law, and on account of the sins of many he will supplicate, and rebels shall be pardoned on his account.

* Or, the vengeance taken on them.

COMMENTARY OF KIMCHI, AND TAR-
GUM OF JONATHAN,
ON HOSEA, I.—II. 1.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS chapter has been selected, partly on account of its obscurity, and partly to afford an opportunity of presenting a view of it, which is at least as old as the Christian era, and has been maintained by some of the ablest expositors both of ancient and modern times.

Few thoughtful and serious persons, it is presumed, can read the first and third chapters of Hosea, regarding them at the same time as containing a plain statement of real actions done at the command of God, without some feeling of dissatisfaction. The first and most natural impression is, that the course of action there enjoined is inconsistent with the nature of God and the character of his prophet. The submission of an implicit faith, which does not dare to look below the surface, may acquiesce in the general principles,

that such is the authoritative statement, and that whatever the divine being commands must agree with the divine will; but the faith which, while it believes, does also “search what or what manner of”* representation is herein contained, is unavoidably thrown back on the inquiry,—are there not certain things which the divine being cannot command, because they are necessarily at variance with his moral character? It is impossible to doubt, that the fountain of right never can enjoin the commission of what is essentially wrong: “he cannot deny himself.”† If therefore, it be possible to take such a view of these and other similar portions of holy scripture as shall remove this difficulty, and at the same time harmonize with other representations in the prophetic books, it would seem that a strong presumption exists in favor of its truth. Such a view is presented in the following commentary and paraphrase.

The accounts in these chapters of Hosea have been regarded by some as narratives of real and sensible actions; by others as mere parabolical fictions intended to illustrate the defection of Israel from the true God; and again by others, as expressive of what took place in the mind of Hosea, while under the influence of the prophetic impulse, or to use the ordinary language, to denote what he saw and did in prophetic vision.

* 1 Pet. i. 11.

† 2 Tim. ii. 13.

The last view is the most probable, and is given, together with other and somewhat similar instances, by Maimonides, in his *Moreh Nevochim*, Part ii. chap. 46; a translation of which may be found in a subsequent part of this volume.

It would not at all comport with the brevity of this introduction, to discuss the whole subject thus suggested to the reader's consideration. I will only remark, that the words employed to designate the woman whom the prophet is directed to marry, must have led the Jewish reader to suppose that no real personage could have been intended. Kimchi indeed tells us that Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, was a well known harlot of that period. But this could be nothing but conjecture. The meaning of the words seems to indicate something very different. Gomer signifies fulness, completion; and Diblaim, two cakes of figs. It certainly requires no great stretch of imagination to conclude, that the prophet intended to represent an ideal female character, under the name of satiety, daughter of cloying pleasures: and, most undoubtedly, it would not be easy to imagine a more appropriate designation of a wretched being, whether the person had been prostituted to infamous paramours, or the mind to idolatrous suitors.

A most able and instructive examination of the subject here referred to, may be found in Hengstenberg's *Christology*, before mentioned,

vol. iii. p. 11 ss. The work is accessible to all, and ought to be in the hands of every theological student, while intelligent Christians in general could not peruse it without pleasure and profit.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI DAVID KIMCHI, ON HOSEA I—II. 1.

1. THE word of the Lord that came to Hosea. Observe that* the words of his prophecy are words of admonition to Israel and Judah, who did evil in the sight of the Lord in the day of those kings, as it is written.

2. The beginning of the word of the Lord† by Hosea. We find the word—to speak—which is employed to designate prophecy, construed with the servile beth ; as, hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us?—the spirit of the Lord spake by me ;—mouth to mouth will I speak by him.‡ In the phrase דבר יהוה, דבר may be a verb in the preterit tense. He means to say, that the first divine communication to Hosea was as follows ;§ take to thyself a wife of whoredoms. Or, דבר may be a

* Lit., and behold.

† Or, (at) the beginning the Lord spake.

‡ Num. xii. 2. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Num. xii. 8.

§ Lit., the first that the Lord spake by Hosea was this that he said to him.

noun; as—and the word is not in them.*—And the Lord said to Hosea; go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms. All this—that he commands him to take a wife of whoredoms, and he took her, and she conceived and bare of him three times—was done in prophetic vision: and it is a symbolical representation† of Israel, who had committed adultery against,‡ the Lord; and this is what he says, for the land hath committed adultery against the Lord. The meaning of—children of whoredoms—(is this;) thou shalt have by her adulterous children, for she is an adulterous wife. Thus Israel, and those who were born of them in those generations, committed adultery against the Lord. And all this took place in prophetic vision, not that the prophet Hosea married an adulterous woman. Although we do find in the words of our rabbies of blessed memory, a literal interpretation:§ for they explain—and the Lord said to Hosea (thus :) The blessed and holy one told him the sin of Israel. He should have said|| before him, Lord of the world, these are thy children, they are

* I cannot find this passage either in Buxtorf's or Fürst's Concordance. In Judg. xviii. 7, and 28, the phrase occurs **אין ודבר להם**, which resembles it more closely than any other I have met with.

† Lit., a parable.

‡ Lit., from after.

§ Lit., that the matter (is to be taken) according to the literal sense.

|| Lit., it was to him to say.

the children of thy proved ones, the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ; roll down mercies upon them. Not satisfied with neglecting to say thus, he added ;* since all the world is thine, exchange them for another people. The holy and blessed one said, what shall I do to this old man? He said to him, take unto thee a wife of whoredom ; and afterwards he said to him, go, send her away from thy presence. If he is able to send her away, so also am I able to send away Israel. After she had borne him two sons and one daughter, the holy and blessed one said to Hosea, shouldst thou not have learned of Moses thy master? after that I had spoken to him, he separated from the woman :† separate thyself from her. He

* Lit., not his sufficiency, (that is, it was not sufficient for him,) that he did not say thus, but he said before him.

† The author here alludes to a Rabbinical gloss on Exod. xix. 15, which is illustrated by the following passage from MAIMONIDES, Foundations of the Law, chap. vii. sect. 10, which I give from the translation of Bernard, pp. 118, 119, omitting the original Hebrew. "Behold, by this you learn that with regard to all the other prophets, these, when prophecy departed from them, returned to their tents again, by which is meant, [that they returned again to*] their bodily wants, like the rest of the people, and therefore did not keep away from their wives ; but as to Moses our Rabbi, he did not return to his former tent, and therefore he did keep away from women,† and from all similar [wants] forever." In a note he adds, from the Shemoth Rabbah ; "Judah says, by the word of the Holy One, blessed be he ! it was said unto him (Moses,) come not at [your] wives, (Exod. xix.

* The brackets are employed by the translator to designate words added by himself, in order to make the version clearer.

† Lit., from the woman or wife.

said before him, Lord of the world, I have children by her, and I cannot send her away? The holy and blessed one said to him, and as* thou (art,) whose wife is adulterous and whose children are children of an adulterous woman, thus (am) I, whose children are the children of Israel, the children of my proved ones, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and they are one of the five possessions,†

15;) now as Moses was comprehended among them, (the Israelites,) then, behold, it was forbidden to all of them. But when he said, *get you into your tents again*, then, behold, he has allowed it to them. Moses, therefore, said unto him, Am I also to be among them? (i. e., is it allowed to me as well as to them?) But he said unto him, it is not so, but: *stand thou here by me.*" A genuine Rabbinical gloss truly.

* Lit., what.

† The following passage from the Mishna illustrates the author's meaning. It is found in the Treatise entitled *Pirke Avoth*, that is, *Maxims*, or important Declarations of the Fathers, chap. vi. sect. 8. See the edition of Surenhusius, vol. iv. p. 489. The holy blessed God has acquired five possessions in his world, and they are these: The law is one possession; heaven and earth are one possession; Abraham is one possession; Israel is one possession; the holy house is one possession. As to the law, how is this proved? Because it is said, the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old.* How as to heaven and earth? Because it is written: thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that you will build for me? and where is the place of my rest?† How as to Abraham? Because it is written, and he blessed him and said, blessed be Abraham of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth.‡ How as to Israel? Because it is written, until thy people pass over, O Lord, until the people pass over which thou hast purchased:§ and he (or it) says, to the saints

* Prov. viii. 22.

† Isa lxi. 1.

‡ Gen. xiv. 19.

§ Exod. xv. 16.

and thou sayest, exchange them for another people! When he knew that he had sinned, he stood up to seek mercies for himself. The holy and blessed one said to him, while thou art seeking mercies for thyself, seek mercies for Israel. Immediately he began with blessings and said, and the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea.* But Jonathan explains the matter as a parable, and his exposition is right.

3. And he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim: the name of a well known harlot of that time.—And she conceived and bare him a son. He says a son, for Jeroboam, the son of Joash, was strong in his kingdom, as the male, who is stronger than the female; and he reigned forty-one years, and restored the coast of Israel from the entering of Hamath unto the sea of the plain.† And Jonathan's exposition is: and he went and prophesied concerning them; and he says, that if they will repent and so forth.—Gomer ex-

that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* How as to the holy house? Because it is written, the place, O Lord, thou hast made for thee to dwell in, the sanctuary, O Lord, (which) thy hands have established.† Also, it says: and he brought them to the border of his sanctuary, to this mountain (which) his right hand had purchased.‡—This is a fair specimen of Talmudical trifling.

* The serious reader will probably be shocked at perusing this piece of Rabbinical impertinence. Such gross and irreverent fables are by no means unfrequent in very ancient Jewish writings. At present, it is to be hoped, a better feeling and taste prevail.

† 2 Kings xiv. 25.

* Ps. xvi. 3.

† Exod. xv. 17.

‡ Ps. lxxviii. 54.

presses the idea of fulness, as if he had said, he will fill up on them their transgressions, and will pardon their iniquity. And the meaning of dib-laim is equivalent to a cake of figs.

4. And the Lord said unto him, call his name Jezreel. This is Jeroboam, the son of Joash, strong in his kingdom, as we have explained. Accordingly he says, for yet a little while : for he did not visit in the days of Jeroboam, for he prospered in his kingdom ; but he visited the blood of Jezreel upon the house of Jehu in the days of Zechariah his son, who reigned only six months, and was slain, and the kingdom* of Jehu ceased. And why does he say, the blood of Jezreel ? (He means) the blood of the house of Ahab, which he (Jehu) shed in Jezreel. And although he did, in this matter, that which was right in the eyes of the Lord : yet, as he did not observe to walk in the law of the Lord, and did not turn from all the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, the blood which he shed was reckoned to him as innocent blood. And thus we see that Baasha was punished on account of the blood of Nadab, son of Jeroboam, even although he was wicked ; as it is said, and because he killed him.† And I will cause to cease the kingdom of the house of Israel : for the kingdom of Israel continued (but) a little while after

* By kingdom, he evidently means, dynasty.

† 1 Kings xvi. 7.

this, for in the days of Hosea, son of Elah, they were utterly destroyed : and respecting the time of Jehu it is said, in those days the Lord began to cut Israel short and so forth.* And Jonathan explains the verse thus : and the Lord said unto him, call his name dispersed and so forth.

5. And it shall be in that day, that I will break : In that day when I shall visit all the blood of Jezreel, I will break the bow of Israel ; meaning, their strength and their power. The vau in וְשִׁבְרֹתֵי is redundant, on account of his having (before) said וְהִשְׁבַּתִּי.—In the valley of Jezreel ; their bow which was in the valley of Jezreel ; for the head of the kingdom of Ephraim was Samaria and Jezreel, for the royal house of Ahab was in Samaria and in Jezreel : and so of the kings who succeed him. And Jonathan explains it thus : And it shall come to pass, in that time, that I will break the strength of the warriors of Israel in the valley (or plain) of Jezreel.

6. And she conceived again and bare a daughter. After she had borne a son, who, as we have explained it, was parabolical of Jeroboam the son of Joash, she bare a daughter. And this† was parabolical of Zechariah his son, and of Shallum,

* 2 Kings x. 32.

† The Hebrew is יְהוֹרָם, the ordinary meaning of which is, and he. But, as the context shows that the child is regarded as a symbol of the feeble monarch, it must have a corresponding sense : unless indeed the text ought to be יְהוֹרָם in the feminine.

son of Jabesh, who reigned after him. For they were feeble like a female, for Zechariah reigned only six months and then was slain, and Shallum was slain after reigning a single month.

7. For I will no more add I will have mercy upon the house of Israel : (that is,) I will no more add that I will have mercy : like, do not increase you talk, (for) that you talk ; then shall we know we follow, (for) that we follow.* **אֲשֶׁא נִשְׂוֹא כִי לָהֶם**: For I will certainly raise up to them :†(that is, I will bring) the enemy upon them, who will take them captive, and lay waste their land. Or, **לָהֶם** may be explained by **אֹתָם**; and thus we have, they slew Abner‡ (**הָרְגוּ לְאַבְנֵר**), equivalent to **אֵת אַבְנֵר**. The meaning will be, I will take them away to the land of their enemies. But it may be explained thus : for until now I have been forgiving (taking away) their sin, for I have been showing mercy to them, but I will not continue (to do so) any more.

7. But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah : for observe the kingdom of Judah continued after the captivity of Israel, from the sixth year of Hezekiah until the destruction of the temple,

* Kimchi means, that in these places there is an ellipsis of the particle that ; and to show his meaning, I have been compelled to translate according to the Hebrew idiom. The texts referred to are, 1 Sam. ii. 3. Hosea vi. 3.

† “ But I will utterly destroy them.” Eng. Trans.

‡ 2 Sam. iii. 30.

and he saved them from the hardy Sennacherib, not by sword and by bow and by war, by horses and by horsemen ; for the angel of the Lord smote in the camp of the Assyrians, as it is written.*

8. And she weaned Lo-ruhamah, and conceived and bare a son. He says, and she weaned, inasmuch as the days of the feeble one were protracted in the time of Zechariah and Shallum : also in the days of Menahem, the son of Gadi, who reigned ten years ; for in his days came Pul, the king of Assyria. Also in the days of Pekahiah his son, who reigned two years, until Pekah, the son of Remaliah stood up and strengthened himself in the kingdom, and reigned twenty years, and violently attacked the kingdom of Judah, and slew 120,000 men in one day. Also he besieged Jerusalem, with Resin king of Syria. And of him he speaks in this parabolical language, and she conceived and bare a son.

9. And of his generation it is said, call his name Lo-ammi : for of him it is said, and he did evil in the sight of the Lord, he did not depart from all the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat.† And the wise Rabbi, Abraham ben Ezra of blessed memory, explains—and she weaned—parabolically : after the ten tribes had gone into captivity, and had begotten children in (the land of,) their captivity, and settled there and did not return to

* 2 Kings xix. 35.

† 2 Kings xv. 28.

their own land, (he says,) therefore call their name Lo-ammi, (not my people.) And so also the Targum of Jonathan.—And he said: this has been explained.

10. And the number of the children of Israel shall be: although they are now called Lo-ammi, yet a time shall come, when the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand which cannot be numbered. It cannot be measured, much less can it be numbered; and thus we have, neither truth nor mercy.* The term measure is applicable to the sand, but not to the stars, in reference to which we use the word number. The prophet Jeremiah therefore distinguishes them, when he applies a comparison to their years,† and says, as the host of Heaven cannot be numbered, nor the sand of the sea measured. And, although he makes this comparison respecting two families of Israel, and this prophet makes it of all Israel, there is nothing surprising in this; for in each it is hyperbolic, and simply denotes multitude.‡—And it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said to them, ye are not my people: instead of what was said in that time, ye are not my people; (namely,) on account of their evil works: it shall be said to them; (meaning) at that

* Hosea iv. 1.

† The years of the people. Jer. xxxiii. 22.

‡ Lit., the intention is only to express by them the idea of multitude.

time. Sons of the living God : for they will return to God, and he will cause their captivity to return, and will have mercy on them. The reason of the expression*—sons of the living God (is this :) Because, at that time (people) were devoting† (their) sons to other Gods not living ; for even the living ones among them, that is, the stars, are not living except by virtue of him who gave life to them, whilst he, the blessed one, has in himself the essential principle of life.‡. But Jona-

* Lit., and the meaning of.

† Lit., making for.

‡ Lit., is living without any producing cause.—The Rabbies regarded the heavenly bodies as animated and glorious beings, and the language of Kimchi accords with this theory. Thus Maimonides, in his Treatise on the Foundations of the Law, chap. iii. sect. 11, which is thus translated by Bernard. “ All the planets and orbs are beings, possessed of soul, mind, and understanding. Moreover, they are alive, they exist, and know him who spake [the word], and the universe existed. All of them, in proportion to their magnitude and to their degree, praise and glorify their Creator just as the angels [do ;] and in the same way as they know the Holy One, blessed be he ! so do they also know themselves. They also know the angels that are above them. Now the knowledge of the planets and of the orbs is less than the knowledge of the angels, yet it is greater than the knowledge of the sons of men.” pp. 97, 98. Nor must it be supposed that such notions are merely Rabbinical figments. They were maintained by several of the ancient Greek philosophers ; and, however strange it may appear to us, even distinguished Christian writers have held similar opinions. This is clearly shown by Vossius, in his learned work on the Origin and Progress of Idolatry, Lib. II. chap. xxx. pp. 454—460. Origen has expressed himself perhaps more plainly on this point than any other of the fathers. He speaks of the stars as “ animated beings, as living creatures endowed with reason

than explains—in the place—according to its literal meaning, (thus :) And it shall come to pass, (that) in the place where they were carried away captive among the nations when they transgressed the law, and it was said to them, ye are not my people, they will repent and become glorious, and it shall be said to them, people of the living God. (In other words they shall be so called.)

11. Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be gathered together. And this will come to pass, at the gathering of the captivity in the time of the Messiah; for during the second temple only Judah and Benjamin, who were made captive in Babylon, went up, and not the children of Judah and the children of Israel together.—And appoint for themselves one head: this is king Messiah. And thus the Targum of Jonathan: and they will appoint for them one head of the house of David.—And they shall come up out of the land; from the land of their captivity they will go up to their own land. But those who interpret this clause—(they shall go up)—into captivity, are wrong.* For (then) what would be the mean-

and power, and illuminated by that wisdom which is the ray of eternal light;” and he distinguishes between their sensible and their intellectual light. See the quotations in SUICER’S *Thesaurus Ecclesiasticus*, under אֲשֶׁר, II. 2, tom. I. p. 560. He speaks also of “the *rational* heavenly powers suffering dismay and derangement, and being suspended from their functions.” See his Comment on Matt. xxiv. 29, 30, quoted in the *Catena Aurea*. Oxford, vol. I. part iii. p. 822.

* Lit., without support.

ing of—and they will appoint for themselves one head—for whoever shall go into captivity? and also—and they shall come up out of the land? whereas,* he should have said, they shall go down; or, they shall go out: for the land of Israel is higher than all (other) lands, and he that goeth to it goeth up, and whoever goeth out of it comes down.† The vau in וַעֲלֶיךָ and they shall come up out of the land is to be explained thus,‡ “after they shall have come up, like the vau in—behold thou art angry and§ we have sinned; and§ he came from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering; and it bred worms and§ stank; and other similar places. For the Messiah will not be their head until they shall be in Jerusalem. And there are some who by one head understand the prophet Elijah, who will bring them up from the captivity.—For great (is) the day of Jezreel: the day, (that is,) the time that their bow has been broken in the valley of Jezreel, is great and exceedingly protracted; the time of their captivity and the completing of their punishment in the captivity—that the time is very much protracted.|| But my

* Lit., for.

† A goodly reason truly, and illustrative of the learned Rabbi's topographical knowledge.

‡ Lit., they explain it.

§ Isa. lxiv. 4, (5.) Levit. ix. 22. Exod. xvi. 20. He means that in these places, as in the text, the vau has the meaning of after.

|| Or, it may be translated thus:—their punishment in the captivity, which is protracted, is a long time.

respected father of blessed memory explains (it thus :) A long time and great were they sown among the nations, but now I will gather them ; therefore he calls the name of Israel, Jezreel ; because God hath sown them among the nations. And the Targum of Jonathan (is,) behold, great is the day of their gathering, (or congregation.)

II. 1. Say ye to your brethren, Ammi, (my people :) Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, of blessed memory interprets (this as follows.) He says to the tribe of Judah and of Benjamin, (as to) your brethren, the ten tribes, who were called Lo-ammi when they were doing evil in the sight of the Lord, say to them in the time of the captivity, Ammi.—And to your sister, Ruhamah :* And, in-much as the parable (or symbol) comprehended both son and daughter, he says—your brethren and your sister. And the word רֵאֲהוּתֵיכֶם, (and your sister,) is with one plural only : for he might have said with a twofold plural אֲחֵיּוֹתֵיכֶם, like —my brethren and my sisters, אֲחֵיּוֹתַי.†

* Meaning—she on whom mercy has been shown.

† Josh. ii. 13, the kri or marginal reading. Kimchi means, that the first form is singular with a plural suffix, whereas the second has not only the plural suffix, but is also a plural noun.

TARGUM OF JONATHAN

ON HOSEA 1.-II. 1.

1. THE word of the prophecy from before the Lord which came to* Hosea, the son of Beeri in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz (and) Hezekiah, kings of the house of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, son of Joash, king of Israel.

2. Beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea : and the Lord said to Hosea, go, prophesy against the inhabitants of the idolatrous city who sin exceedingly,† for the inhabitants of the land will commit idolatry (or fornication,) against‡ the service of the Lord.

3. And he went and prophesied concerning them, that if they would repent he would pardon them, and if not, they should fall like the falling of the leaves of the fig-trees. But they persisted in doing|| evil works.

* Lit., which was with.

† Lit., add to sin.

‡ Lit., from after.

§ This is in allusion to the meaning of דבלים.

|| Lit., they added and did.

4. And the Lord said to him, call their name dispersed, for yet a little while and I will visit the blood of the idolaters which Jehu shed in Jezreel, whom he slew because they served Baal. They turned to commit idolatry after the calves of Beth-el ; therefore will I reckon innocent blood against the house of Jehu, and will make the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.

5. And it shall come to pass in that time, that I will break the strength of the warriors of Israel in the valley (or plain,) of Jezreel.

6. And they continued to do evil works : and he said to him, call their name,—for I will not continue to show mercy to the house of Israel ; but if they will return, I will surely pardon them.

7. But I will show mercy on the house of Judah, and I will deliver them by the word of the Lord their God, and they shall not be delivered by bow and by sword and by warriors, by horses and by horsemen.

6. But the generations of those who have been carried away captive among the children of the nations are found (to be) those who have not mercy shown on their works ; and they continued to do evil works.

9. And he said, call their name, not my people, for ye are not my people, because ye do not confirm (or continue to keep) the words of my law ; my word was not among your helpers.

10. And the number of the children of Israel

shall be great, like the sand of the sea which is neither measured nor numbered. And it shall come to pass, (that) in the place where they were carried away captive among the nations, when they transgressed the law, and it was said to them, ye are not my people, they will repent and become glorious, and it shall be said to them, people of the living God.

11 And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together in perfect unison,* and shall appoint for themselves one head of the house of David, and they shall go up from the land of their captivity, for great will be the day of their gathering (or congregation.)

12. Prophets, say to your brethren, my people, turn to my law, and I will have mercy upon your congregation.

* Lit., like one.

COMMENTARY OF RABBI SAADIAS,
THE GAON,
ON DANIEL IX. 24—27.

24. SEVENTY weeks are determined upon thy people:—If we reckon, we shall know how many years these are. Ten times seven amount to seventy. Now seventy weeks are four hundred and ninety years.* Deduct from them the seventy years of the Babylonian captivity, from the time of the destruction of the temple by Nebuchadnezzar to the second year of Darius, (and) four hundred and twenty years will remain; and this† was the duration of the second house. That is to say, he decrees seventy weeks for thy people and thy city Jerusalem, thy holy city, which is about to be built. Observe as respects its continuance,‡ (that,) comprehending the (time of the) Babylonian captivity and the duration also of the

* The best of the Jewish commentators, Jarchi, Aben Ezra, and Abarbanel, agree with Saadiah in considering Daniel's weeks as weeks of years.

† Lit., for thus, or which thus.

‡ That of the whole period.

second temple, there are seventy weeks, which are equivalent to four hundred and ninety years; seventy for the (period of the) destruction, and four hundred and twenty for that of the building.—To finish the transgression: which they had committed. And to make an end of sins: that the holy and blessed God will make an end of the sins. And to make reconciliation for: Israel's iniquities.—And to bring in everlasting righteousness: this (refers to) the house of the sanctuary, as it is written,—a settled place for thee to abide in forever,* and it is called the everlasting house of the sanctuary; (or, the house of the sanctuary of the worlds.†) In the world was the first building; and in the world the second building; and in the world the third building, which shall stand for ever and ever; (or, for all worlds.†)—And to seal up vision and prophecy: for after the building of the second house no prophet arose in Israel, except such as were favored with the Bath Kol.‡

* 1 Kings viii. 13.

† The reader of the original will note the word עולם rendered world, and the plural עולמי עולמים, expressive of perpetuity. The allusion which the latter contains to the former cannot be preserved in an English translation.

‡ Lit., made use of. *Bath kol* means *the daughter voice*, or *of the voice*. It is a phrase employed to denote certain modes of communicating divine intimations inferior to those direct methods which we read of in the Old Testament. It is often applied to merely incidental concurrences. In this case the Bath kol is the same sort of superstition as that practised among the ancients under the name

—And to anoint the holy of holies : that the glory of the greatness of the second house might be greater than that of the first, as it is written—the glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former.* And this is the meaning of anointing, which denotes dignity, as—to be anointed by them, which the Targumists explain by—to make great.†—Yet‡ there are expositors

of sortes Virgilianæ. The Jews say, that after the time of the last prophets, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, the spirit of prophecy departed from Israel. Still, however, they were favored with the Bath kol. This was a voice from heaven accompanying thunder; and by this voice, they maintain, that the authority of their great masters, especially Hillel, was confirmed. The other kind of Bath kol may be illustrated by a story from the Talmud. “Rabbi Eliezer says:—they follow the hearing,” that is, the leading “of the Bath kol. Rabbi Johanan and Rabbi Simeon desired to see the face of Samuel: let us follow, say they, the hearing of Bath kol. Travelling therefore near a school, they heard a boy’s voice reading—and Samuel died.* They observed this, and so it came to pass; for Samuel of Babylon was dead.”—And again: “Rabbi Jonah and Rabbi Josah went to visit Rabbi Acha lying sick. Let us follow, say they, the hearing of Bath kol. They heard the voice of a certain woman, speaking to her neighbor—the light is put out; to whom she said, let it not be put out, nor let the light of Israel be quenched.” Lightfoot’s Hebrew and Talmudical Exercitations on Matthew iii. 17, and x. 34. Works, Vol. II. pp. 129, 181, folio, London, 1684. The reader may find several fortuitous coincidences somewhat like these mentioned by Prideaux in his *Old and New Testament Connected*, Part II. Book V. Anno. 107, Vol. II. p. 330.

* Hag. ii. 9.

† So the Targum of Onkelos on Exodus xxix. 29, the text referred to.

‡ Lit., and.

* 1 Sam. xxv. 1.

who say, that למשורה means (here) to stretch out a measure, explaining it by the Chaldee משחתא, a measure, in accordance with what is said—and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem.*

25. From the going forth of the commandment: from the time that the word proceeds from the Creator, and the decree is determined to bring back the captivity from Babylon, and to build Jerusalem under the auspices† of Cyrus.—ער' משיח נגיד, until the chief is anointed‡ (that is,) until the king, who is the chief, shall become great, so as to build Jerusalem, (there shall) yet (be) seven weeks. These seven weeks are forty-nine years: from the time that the Creator announced to them the joyful tidings that Jerusalem should be built, even to the second year of Darius king of Persia. And afterwards Jerusalem shall be built, and shall continue standing§ four hundred and twenty years. Here now are|| seventy weeks, wanting ten years, (and) these ten years Bithier stood.¶ And when they have gone up to

* Z'ch. i. 16.

† Lit., at the hand.

‡ Unto the Messiah the prince. Eng. Trans.

§ Lit., and shall stand in its structure.

|| Lit., behold.

¶ I have given a literal translation of the words of Saadias, as they stand in the printed text of Buxtorf and the Bomberg Bible. The 420 years do not amount to within ten years of the 70 weeks or 490 years. They want ten weeks or 70 years of this period. If it were allowable to translate the original *ten of years*, we might suppose the author to mean *ten weeks of years*. The difficulty would

Jerusalem, the street shall be built, that is, Jerusalem and its walls.—**וְהָרִיץ**.* These are fortified† trenches lately made by the inhabitants of Jerusalem, in order to prevent people from passing over.—And in troublous times: that is, as regards‡ the courts of the temple,§ the charges and stations of the priests and Levites: as if he had said, all these years Jerusalem shall be desolated.

26, 27. **כִּנָּה—וְעַל כִּנָּה שְׁקֻצִּים** is equivalent to **יָד**, (hand, power.) He means to say, as long as the power (influence) of those who ate swine's flesh, the abomination and the mouse|| prevailed. After the sixty-two weeks, the anointed shall be cut off, and the dominion (shall) not (continue) to him: (namely,) after the destruction of the house, and the desolation of the temple.—And until the

thus be removed, but it is very doubtful whether the translation is admissible.—Bither or Bithra was a place of great strength, enclosing a very considerable space, near Jerusalem according to some accounts, and according to others not far from the Mediterranean Sea. It is famous as the scene of extraordinary carnage during the reign of the emperor Adrian, and for the destruction of the false Messiah, Bar Chocheb, who had taken refuge there. The accounts of these and other matters connected with Bither are greatly exaggerated by the Jewish writers. If the reader wishes to peruse them, he may gratify his curiosity by consulting Basnage, Book VII. chap. xii. § 28, 29, 30; Jost, Book XII. chap. xii., and the Appendix, 34, 35, 36; and Buxtorf's Lexicon, Chal. Tal. et Rab. Col. 372.

* And the ditch. Eng. Trans. † Lit., enclosed.

‡ Lit., these (are.) § Lit., the house of the sanctuary.

|| Isa. lxvi. 17.

consummation and that determined : shall come on the desolated. This is Jerusalem ; and he shall make sacrifice and oblation to cease.—People of the prince that shall come—and the end thereof with a flood ; this is the emperor Adrian, who destroyed the temple, and make sacrifice and oblation to cease, and destroyed the place of the daily service.—**וְעַל כֵּן** : And on account of those who eat swine's flesh and the abomination, he makes Israel desolate, even until what is fully determined* is poured out on the captivity of Israel the desolated.

* Lit., completed and determine l.

EXTRACTS FROM JEWISH COMMENTARY ON PARTICULAR PASSAGES.

GEN. XLIX. 10. One that exercises authority shall not depart from the house of Judah, nor a scribe from his children's children forever, until Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom, and whom the nations shall obey. Chal. Targ. of Onkelos.

Kings shall not cease from the house of Judah, nor skilful teachers of the law from his children's children, until the time that king Messiah comes, whose is the kingdom, and whom all the kingdoms of the earth are about to serve. Jerusalem Targum.

The Samaritan agrees very nearly with the Hebrew.

For the views of Jarchi and Aben Ezra, the reader is referred to my Companion to the Book of Genesis, p. 372—374.

Psalm II. Aben Ezra considers this Psalm to have been written in honor of David, on occasion of his being anointed king, or else in celebration of the Messiah. Jarchi comments thus on the first verse. Why do the heathen rage? Our

Rabbies explain this of king Messiah, but in its simple meaning, it is evidently explicable of David himself, according to what is said—and the Philistines heard that they had anointed David king over Israel,* and they gathered together their hosts, and they fell into his hand: and of them he says, why do the heathen rage and all of them assemble together.

It will require much more than the Rabbi's assertion to persuade the reader, that the interpretation which explains the whole Psalm of David is the most literal or natural. It is most clearly explicable of the Messiah, as applied in the New Testament. See Acts. iv. 25, 26: xiii. 33. Heb. i. 5. The admission of Jarchi, however, is highly important, namely, that the most ancient Jewish expositors interpreted the Psalm of the Messiah.

XLV. 1. This Psalm relates either to David, or to the Messiah his son, as he is called—and my servant David shall be their prince forever.† Aben Ezra. He expounds several clauses either of David or the Messiah.

3. Thy beauty, O King Messiah, is superior to (that of) the sons of men. Chal. Targ.

LXXII. 1. By‡ Solomon, it is said prophetically, O God, give the course§ of thy judgments

* 2 Sam. v. 17.

† Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

‡ Lit., by the hand of.

§ It may be translated, way, reason, ground.

to king Messiah, and thy righteousness to the son of king David. Chal. Targ.

A prophecy of David or one of the poets, relating either to Solomon or to the Messiah. Aben Ezra.

16. This is expressive of increase and multitude, and our Rabbies explain it by abundance of meal to make bread, in reference to the days of the Messiah, and the whole Psalm (they explain) of king Messiah. Jarchi.

17. They of the house of Yenoï say, that Yenon is his name, (that is, Messiah's,) as it is said,—his name shall live forever, with the sun his name shall be perpetuated, (יֵנוֹן, Yenon.) Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrim, fol. 98. 2; or as quoted in Essay on our Lord's discourse at Capernaum recorded in the sixth chapter of St. John, p. 87.

Isaiah xlii. 1. Behold my servant Messiah, I will bring him near, my choice one in whom my word delighteth, I will give him my Holy Spirit. Chal. Targ.

Behold my servant: this is king Messiah, as we explain it.—I will uphold him; this is figurative, as a king is supported by his faithful servant.—I have put my Spirit upon him; as he says also concerning him—and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.* David Kinchi; who then pro-

* Isa. xi. 2.

ceeds with this exposition, and illustrates it by several other quotations.

Jeremiah, xxiii. 5. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will raise up to David Messiah of righteousness,* and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgments of righteousness and justice in the land, (or earth.)

6. And in his days the house of Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely, and this is the name which they shall call him; justice shall be done to us from the Lord in his days. Chal. Targ.

5. A righteous branch: This is Messiah; and he calls him a branch, because his coming forth in the world will be like the coming forth of a branch (or sprout) of the field, which increases greatly. Thus, as he is righteous, there will be with him righteous people in abundance in the world, as it is written—in his days shall the righteous burst forth;† and it is said—he shall pass right sentence on many people.‡—And a king shall rule as king.§ He repeats the word in

* Thus the Antwerp Polyglott. The London and Buxtorf read, Messiah of the just, but the other reading is preferable.

† Ps. lxxii. 7, “flourish.” Eng. Trans.

‡ Isa. ii 4, or Mic. iv. 3, “he shall judge among many people.” Eng. Trans.

§ The proper translation would be, “a king shall reign.” I have employed the above to enable the English reader to understand what follows. The Hebrew uses, in the form of a verb, the same word which occurs immediately before, as a noun; on which Kimchi refines somewhat.

order to strengthen the meaning :* for in mentioning the action, he mentions also the noun with it, † and the introduction of the noun (immediately) afterwards is intended to add force, as—to gain dishonest gain—not to rain rain upon it—all treacherous actors of treachery ; ‡ and thus (here), a king shall rule as king. From what he is said to do we know indeed his regal character ; § but the addition of the noun which expresses it is designed to declare emphatically, that his kingdom shall extend over all the earth, and not be confined to Israel, as it is said of him—he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river even unto the ends of the earth. ||—**וְהַשְׂכִּיל**, shall prosper : thus the Targum of Jonathan ; and thus (it is said)—and David prospered in all his ways, ¶ and in other similar places.

6. And this is his name and so forth : Israel will call the Messiah by this name, the Lord our righteousness, because in his days the righteousness of the Lord will be established with us continually, never more to depart. The name is here applied in the same way as it is employed by Moses our master, on whom be peace, who calls

* Lit., the action.

† That is, in speaking of the act of reigning, he speaks also of a king who reigns.

‡ Ezek. xxii. 27. Isa. v. 6. Jer. xii. 1. In these three places the Hebrew corresponds with that in the text.

§ Lit., in his saying—shall reign—we know that he is a king.

|| Ps. lxxii. 8.

¶ 1 Sam. xviii. 14.

the altar, the Lord is my banner;* and Jacob calls the altar, God the God of Israel.† Each is to be explained according to the nature of the case.‡ Thus also it is said—and the name of the city from that day (shall be,) the Lord is there.§ Kimchi.

XXXI. 31. ss. This declaration shows, that, in the time of the future redemption, God will give to his people a new law, other and different from that which we (now) have. But this is repugnant to the fundamental principle which we believe, that the law is perpetual and immutable. Rabbi Don Isaac Abarbanel.||

XXXIII. 15. In those days and in that time, I

* Exod. xvii. 15.

† Gen. xxxiii 20.

‡ Lit., according to the meaning which is found in it.

§ Ezek. xlviii. 35.

|| The supposition, that Jeremiah has in view the substitution of a new law, internal and spiritual, (as that of the Gospel confessedly is,) in place of the Mosaic, is indeed at variance with the fundamental principle which the leading Jewish authorities have assumed; but this only proves, that this fundamental principle of theirs is laid in the sand, and is wholly indefensible. The admission of the Spanish Rabbi is, however, all important; and the reader will not fail to observe, how entirely it coincides with the view presented in the Epistle to the Hebrews, viii. 6—13. Other Jewish expositors, among whom is David Kimchi, suppose the prophet to speak of an increase of true religion, in accordance with the ritual and tenor of the Mosaic covenant. But the religious condition of Judaism has never been of such a character as to justify so restricted an interpretation; and, from the nature of the system, from its practical imperfection, from the limited capability of its application, it must be evident that it was intended to be introductory to something better; that it is not the glorious temple itself, but merely the vestibule of that great moral building, which is to comprehend the innumerable multitudes of

will raise up to David Messiah of righteousness, and he shall execute the judgment of equity and righteousness in the earth.

16. And in those days the house of Judah shall be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely; and this is its name whereby it shall be called,—there shall be done for us benefits from the Lord in the midst of it. Chal. Targ.

15. A righteous branch. This is king Messiah.

16. And this is what they shall call it—the Lord our righteousness. The holy one, blessed be he, shall call Jerusalem—the Lord our righteousness; meaning, that its inhabitants shall say, the Lord our righteousness.—(He then gives the explanation from the Targum, and proceeds thus.) Above he says of the king Messiah,—and this is his name which they shall call him, the Lord our righteousness: both amount to the same thing, as we have (already) explained the matter. Kimchi.

Joel iii. 1. (ii. 28.) And it shall come to pass afterward: like—and it shall come to pass in the latter days;* that is, in the time of the Messiah, as it is said—for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord.†

mankind wherever scattered throughout the world. Would to God, that the Israelites would candidly consider their system in this light! They might thus be prepared to examine dispassionately the claims of Christianity, and to consider calmly the grand question,—“what is the character of the Messiah, and the system to be established by him, as delineated by the Hebrew prophets?”

* Micah iv. 1.

† Isa. xi. 9.

2. (29.) My Spirit—and that is, the spirit of knowledge and understanding, as he says—and the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him *; which he afterwards explains by—the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. Kimchi.

Micah. iv. 7. last clause. And the kingdom of the Lord shall be revealed to them in mount Zion from this time and forever.†

8. But thou, Messiah of Israel, who art hidden‡ on account of the sins of the congregation of Zion, to thee shall come the kingdom, and the former dominion shall come to the kingdom of the congregation of Jerusalem. Chal. Targ.

IV. 1. “After having spoken of the devastations of Zion and Jerusalem, he gives them this consolation. It shall be in the latter days : which are those of the Messiah.—The mountain of the house of the Lord : which he says shall be as the high places of the forest,§ shall hereafter be established on the top of the mountains. He does not mean that this mountain shall be raised in bulk, but that the nations shall exalt and honor it, and shall

* Isa. xi. 2.

† Lit., and until forever.

‡ Strange as it may seem to the merely English reader, some such idea as this is given in the Syriac, Arabic, Septuagint and Vulgate versions. Perhaps it originated from a Jewish notion, that the Messiah was to be concealed; perhaps it gave rise in part to that notion. Comp. John vii. 27.

§ iii. 12.

go there to worship the Lord. And, inasmuch as the nations worshipped their gods upon high mountains and hills, he says that then they shall worship the Lord with one consent, and shall exalt this mountain above all others that have ever been exalted and glorified.

2. The teacher is king Messiah, of whom he (afterwards) says, and he shall judge. Kimchi.

1. There is no doubt that this prophecy relates to the future ; therefore he says—in the latter days. And the meaning is this ; inasmuch as he mentioned above that the mountain of the house should become high places of the forest, he (now) turns to comfort Israel ; for the glory of the house shall again return. It is (well) known that the mountain of the house was not high ; but observe that the sense is this ; its fame shall be widely extended, and from all corners (of the earth) people shall repeatedly bring offerings to it. It is as if it were on the tops of all the mountains and were elevated above the hills, so that all the inhabitants of the earth might see it.

2. For out of Zion shall go the law : (namely) to all the nations, as it is written—that they may all call upon the name of the Lord and serve him with one consent.*

3. And he shall judge : the judge is the Messiah. Aben Ezra.

* Zeph. iii. 9.

V. 2. From thee shall come forth the Messiah, to exercise dominion over Israel. Chal. Targ.

From thee shall come forth for me Messiah, the son of David; and thus he says, the stone that the builders refused.* Jarchi.

He says of Bethlehem—although thou art little among the nations of Judah, (yet) from thee shall come forth for me a judge to be ruler in Israel: and this is the king Messiah.

3. His brethren: the Messiah's.†

4. After the trouble,‡ king Messiah shall stand and feed Israel in the strength of the Lord.—The name of the Messiah shall now be great, after the judgment of the wicked.

5. This peace is that of the Messiah, who shall be the cause of peace, as it is said, and he shall speak peace unto the heathen.§ The shepherds and principal men are the princes of king Messiah; both terms denote the same thing.—But why does he say seven, eight? It is like—give a portion to seven, and also to eight,|| and denotes many. *אֶעֱלֶיךָ* is equivalent to *עִמָּךְ*, and means *with* king Messiah.

* Ps. cxviii. 22.

† Lit., the pronoun in—his brethren, (relates) to the Messiah.

‡ He alludes to that spoken of by Daniel xii. 1, whom he had just before quoted.

§ Zech. ix. 10.

|| Eccles. xi. 2.

¶ The English is—"against him," meaning the enemy. Kimchi considers the preposition to denote connection with the Messiah, and refers for a similar use of it to Numbers ii. 20, where our translation has "by."

10. I will cut off thy horses : that is, there shall be no need of horses and chariots ; for after the war with Gog and Magog, thou shalt have perpetual peace.

11. And I will cut off the cities of thy land : that is to say, I will multiply you and give you peace, as if I were to cut off the walls of your cities, so that they should not be called cities, but open places. Kimchi. He then refers to Zech. ii. 8. (4.)

V. 1. It is clear to me that the judge of Israel is either the Messiah or Zerubbabel, according to what follows, and thou Bethlehem Ephratah. The scripture speaks in reference to the purpose, as—they parted my garments among them,* and respecting Balak—he fought against Israel,† because he says, perhaps I may be able to fight against them ;‡ and—the men pursued after them to Jordan ;§ while yet the spies had escaped.

10, 11. I will cut off thy horses ; to make war, for they shall be unnecessary. And I will cut off the cities of thy land which are surrounded by walls ; for, unless a man feared enemies, it would be best for him to dwell in unwall'd places, where the air is free. The sense is, there shall be peace in the land, and no need of defenced places. Aben Ezra.

* Ps. xxii. 18.

† Num. xxii. 11.

† Josh. xxiv. 9.

§ Josh. ii. 7.

Zechariah ii. 9. At that time, when this prophecy is about to be fulfilled,* ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me : and this shall be hereafter, in the time of the Messiah.

10. Sing and rejoice. This prophecy as far as—his holy habitation†—must be explained of the future, of the days of the Messiah, because it is said—and many nations shall be joined—(and,) be silent O all flesh :‡ which we did not see during the second temple. Kimchi.

III. 8. Behold, I will bring out my servant, the Messiah, and he shall be manifested. Chal. Targ.

Branch : that is, Zerubbabel.—But some explain it of king Messiah ; as if he had said, although I bring you this deliverance, yet will I bring you a greater, when I shall bring my servant the branch. Thus Jonathan. Kimchi.

Branch : this is Zerubbabel, as it is said—his name is the branch ; and the end of the section refers to Zerubbabel. But many commentators explain it of the Messiah, called Zerubbabel, because of his posterity, as (it is said)—and David my servant (shall be) a prince over them forever.§ Aben Ezra.

* Lit., draws near.

† Verse 13.

‡ Verses 11, 13. Dr. M'Caul, in his translation of Zechariah, seems to have read הם instead of הם from v. 13, as in Buxtorf and the Bomberg ; for he translates it, "that is," and regards it as explanatory of the words "many nations."

§ Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

VIII. 1. ss. This section is one of consolation, and refers to the time of the Messiah, when Gog and Magog shall come to make war upon Jerusalem.

12. I will cause to possess. This may possibly relate to the second temple, but the following verse shows that it refers to the coming of the Messiah, for it says, O house of Judah and house of Israel, and the Israelites did not return during the second temple.

20. This will take place when Messiah comes. Kimchi.

IX. 9. ss. It is not possible to explain this of any other than king Messiah, of whom it is said—he shall rule from sea to sea, and no such ruler appeared during the continuance of the second temple. Jarchi.*

XII. lss. This will take place on the return of Israel with Messiah the son of Joseph to Jerusalem.

10. And I will pour : I will pour the spirit of peace and supplications upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Before this trouble shall come upon them at the beginning, because they killed Messiah son of Joseph. Then the Lord will be angry, and will destroy all the nations that came

* Kimchi gives the same explanation. Aben Ezra interprets this and several other places in Zechariah, of some one of the Asmonæan princes. But Abarbanel expresses his surprise at such an exposition of this place, and shows in detail that the exposition of Aben Ezra is untenable. See M'Caul on Zechariah, p. 94.

against Jerusalem. And this is (what is meant by)—and they shall look on him ; then all the nations will look to me, to see what I will do to those who pierced Messiah, son of Joseph.

XIV. 4. And his feet shall stand : Behold a sign and a wonder which the Lord will perform in that day ; nothing of which has been accomplished until the present time.

11. And they shall dwell in it : securely, with the Schekinah. Then will come Messiah, son of David. Aben Ezra.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
YAD OF MAIMONIDES.

TRADITIONARY DECISIONS,
OR
CONSTITUTIONS RELATING TO THE WORSHIPPERS
OF STARS AND PLANETS, AND STATUTES
REFERRING TO THEM.

CHAPTER FIRST.

1. IN the time of Enos, mankind committed a great error, and the counsel of the wise men of that generation became brutish, and Enos himself was one of those who erred. Their error was this. They said, inasmuch as God created the stars and orbs to regulate the world, and set them on high, and gave them glory, as they are attendants that serve before him, they are worthy of being praised and honored and of having glory give to them. And this is the will of God, the blessed one, that we should magnify and honor whomsoever he hath magnified and honored, as a king is pleased to honor those who stand in his presence : and this (indeed) is to honor the king himself.

2. After this consideration* had arisen in their minds, they began to build temples to the stars, and to present offerings to them, and to praise and honor them in words, and to worship before them, in order to obtain the favor of the Creator through their mischievous opinion. This was the foundation of idolatry, and thus did they affirm who practised it and knew on what ground it rested ; not that they maintained that there was no God but the stars. And thus Jeremiah says : who would not fear thee, O king of nations ? for to thee doth it appertain ; (or, thee doth it become ;) forasmuch as among all the wise men of the nations, and in all their kingdoms, there is none like unto thee, but they are altogether brutish and foolish, the stock is a doctrine of vanities : † that is to say, they all know that thou art God alone, ‡ but their error and their folly consist in imagining that vanity to be thy will.

3. But after a long time, false prophets rose up among men, who alleged that God had commanded them to worship some particular star or the stars in general, to present offerings and libations to it according to some prescribed manner, § to build a temple for it, and to make an

* Lit., thing, matter. He means the train of thought just expressed.

† x. 7, 8.

‡ The Hebrew is simply **יֵאָתֶה הָרָא** but the meaning is as I have given it. Comp. **אֲנִי הָרָא** and the context in Isa. xliii. 13.

§ Lit., thus and thus.

image of it, in order that all the people, the women and children, and other inhabitants of the country, might worship it. He* also showed them an image of his own devising,† and said, that this was the image of that particular star which had been made known‡ to him in his prophecy. In this way they began to make images in temples, and under the trees, and on the tops of the mountains, and on the hills; and they assembled together and worshipped them, and said to all the people, that this image did good and evil, and it was proper to serve and fear it. The priests told them also, that by serving it they would multiply and prosper, and prescribed to them what they should do, and what they should avoid.§

4. Other deceivers then began to arise, and to declare, that the star itself or the orb or the angel spake with them, and said to them, worship me in this or that manner, and taught them the mode of his service, directing what they should do, and what they should avoid. And this matter spread over all the world, so that the images were worshipped|| with services differing from each

* That is, some one of the false prophets.

† Lit., which he had devised of his heart. See 1 Kings xii. 33.

‡ Lit., which they had made known.

§ The original is in the future and imperative. Literally: you shall multiply and prosper, and do so and so, and you shall not do so and so.

|| Lit., to worship images.

other, and offerings were presented, and adoration was paid to them.

5. Again, after a long time, the glorious and venerable God was forgotten* by all men,† and ceased to be mentioned or thought of, and they became ignorant of him. And all the people of the earth, and the women and children, were found to know nothing but the image of wood and of stone, and the temple of stones, to which from childhood they were taught to pay adoration and divine worship, and by the name of which they were accustomed to swear. Even the wise men that were among them, as their priests and others of that class, thought that there was no God but the stars and the orbs, on whose account and in whose likeness those images were made. But the everlasting rock‡—there was not a man who acknowledged him, neither did any know him, a few individuals in the world excepted, as Enoch and Methuselah, Noah, Shem and Eber. And in this way was the world going on and revolving,

* Lit., was forgotten from the mouth of all men and from their minds. I have followed the text as given in the edition of the *Yad*, which was published by JOSEPH ATHIAS, at Amsterdam, in four volumes, folio, 1702, which has נשתכח. Vossius however reads נשתקע was destroyed, perished. If this reading be preferred השם would perhaps be best rendered the name, referring to the appellation Jehovah, and the character of God, which it implies.

† Lit., every living thing. See Gen. vii. 4, 23.

‡ Or, the rock of the world. See the note on the seventh chapter on the foundations of the law, section 10.

until the pillar* of the world was born, our father Abraham.

6. After this mighty one was weaned, he began to revolve† in his mind while yet a child, and he began to think day and night, and it was a subject of wonder to him, how it was possible that this orb should be continually moving on, while there was no one to cause and direct its movements. And who causes it (to move)? since it is impossible that it should cause itself. But he had no teacher, none who could tell him anything; on the contrary, he was overwhelmed, in Ur of the Chaldees, among stupid idolators; and his father, and his mother, and the whole nation, worshipped the stars and planets, and he along with them. But he revolved in his mind and considered until he reached the way of truth, and comprehended the rule‡ of righteousness by his own correct understanding. And thus he knew that there is one God, and that he caused the orb to move, and he created all things, and that among all beings he alone is God. He knew also that the whole world was in error, and that the cause of their falling into this error was, that they had

* Comp., the use of *στύλος* in Gal. ii. 9, and of *columen* in Horace, Carm. Lib. ii. Od. 17, 5.

† Lit., to move to and fro. See Dan. xii. 4. It conveys the idea of careful investigation and search. Although much of the author's statement is evidently founded on tradition, a large proportion of it is in itself highly probable.

‡ Lit., line.

worshipped the stars and the images, until the truth was lost from their minds. And Abraham was forty years old when he knew his Creator.

7. On obtaining a proper knowledge of him,* he began to enter into controversy with the people of Ur of the Chaldees, and to reply to their arguments,† and to say, the course ye are pursuing is not that of truth. And he broke the images, and began to teach the people, that the only being to whom divine worship ought to be paid was the God of the world, and that to him adoration ought to be given, and offerings and libations presented, in order that all future generations‡ should know him; and that it was right to destroy and break in pieces all the images, lest they should be employed to lead all the people into the same error as they had fallen into who imagined, that there was no other God but these.

8. After he had prevailed against them by his reasons, the king endeavored to put him to death, but a miracle was wrought for him,§ and he went

* Lit., after he had acknowledged and known.

† The reader of the original will perceive, that I have transposed the author's arrangement, in order to adapt it to our mode of speaking. The literal translation is as follows: he began to return answers to the children of Ur of the Chaldees, and to enter into controversy with them.

‡ Lit., all the creatures that are coming.

§ The author alludes to the Rabbinical tale of Abraham's miraculous deliverance from the fire (Heb. רַחֲמֵי), of the Chaldees, into which the king had commanded him to be thrown.

out to Haran, and began to stand* and proclaim with a loud voice to all the people,† and to teach them that there is one God of the whole world, who ought to be served. And he went on, proclaiming and collecting the people, from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom, until he arrived at the land of Canaan, and he (continued) proclaiming, as it is said—and he called there on the name of the Lord, the God of the world.‡

9. And after the people had assembled to him, and made inquiries of him respecting his discourses, he instructed each individual according to his intellectual ability, until he brought him back to the way of truth, until thousands and myriads assembled to him. And these were the men of Abraham's house, and he implanted in their minds this great fundamental principle, and composed books in relation to it, and taught it to his son Isaac. And Isaac settled as instructor

* לעמור Vossius renders this, *ibique consistens*. But the infinitive is evidently connected with the words that precede and follow, and although Abraham did spend a considerable time in Haran, it was not the author's intention to say any thing on this subject. He either refers to the patriarch as a public speaker standing up in the presence of the multitude, or, as I rather think, employs the word to denote his attention and perseverance in proclaiming the doctrine of the one true God. The Hebrew word is thus used. See Gesenius in עמר I. 2; and comp. Isa. lxi. 5. Mic. v. 3. (4.)

† Lit., the world.

‡ Gen. xxi. 33. Our English translation renders אל עולם everlasting God. And this is most probably correct, but the context shows that Maimonides understood it as I have rendered it.

and admonisher, and Isaac taught it to Jacob, and appointed him to teach, and he settled* as instructor and admonisher of all those who attached themselves to him. And Jacob our father taught all his sons, and he separated Levi, and appointed him head, and placed him in a school, to teach the way of God, and to observe the commands of Abraham; and he commanded his sons not to separate from the sons of Levi the chief, in order that the doctrine should not be forgotten.

10. Thus the truth† was continually increasing in strength among the sons of Jacob and their adherents, and there was formed in the world a people that knew the Lord, until the Israelites had spent a long time among the Egyptians. Then they turned to learn their works, and to worship stars and planets like them, except the tribe of Levi who adhered to the commandments of the fathers, and never practised idolatry. Thus the fundamental principle which Abraham had implanted was almost cut off and rooted out, and

* The original is **יָרַשׁ**. If this is the root, the meaning will be as given in the text. But if it be derived from **שָׁבַר** to return, it must be taken adverbially, thus: and again Isaac or Jacob became an instructor; intimating that the heads of the patriarchal family were successively teachers of true religion. In this case, however, the ordinary usage would require this verb to be immediately followed by another. Maimonides seems to have confounded the future divine choice of the family of Levi with some supposed arrangement of the patriarch Jacob.

† Lit., the thing or word.

the children of Jacob returned* to the error of the world and their impieties.

11. But God, on account of his love towards us, and because he would keep the oath (which he swore) to Abraham our father, constituted Moses our master the master of all the prophets, and sent him. After Moses our master had exercised his prophetic office, and God had chosen Israel for an inheritance, he crowned them with the commandments and taught them the way of his service, and what judgment should be pronounced on those who worship stars and planets, and on all who imitate their error.

* This is a literal translation of the original. Mr. Bernard seems disposed to modify the direct assertion of Maimonides respecting their ancestors. He introduces in brackets the qualifying phrase "had nearly," and adds in a note—"literally: and the children of Jacob [would have] come back or returned." The Old Testament exhibits abundant evidence, that such modification is entirely unauthorized.

TRADITIONARY DECISIONS
OR
CONSTITUTIONS ON THE FOUNDATIONS
OF THE LAW.

CHAPTER SEVENTH.

1. IT belongs to the foundations* of the law, to know that God enables men to prophesy. And prophecy falls only on a wise man, eminent for wisdom, mighty in subduing his propensities, whose natural inclination does not overpower him in any thing, but who continually conquers by his knowledge his natural inclination, and who is a man of an enlarged and well regulated mind.†

2. [The author then proceeds to say, that in such a man, intelligent, wise, holy, removed from all worldly associations, and absorbed by heavenly contemplations, the Holy Spirit will rest ; that he

* By this phrase the author intends to denote first principles, as he says in the very beginning of his work : the foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom is, to know that there is a first being, and he is the producer of every other being.

† Or, the original may be rendered thus : who possesses extensive and well arranged knowledge.

intermingles with that grade of angels who are called *ishim*,* and becomes quite a different being from what he was before.]

3. There are different grades of prophets. As one wise man is superior in wisdom to his companion, so also one prophet is greater in prophecy than another. But they all see the prophetic appearance only in a dream, in a vision at night or by day, after a deep sleep hath fallen on them ; as it is said, I will make myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream.† And (as to) all of them, when they prophesy, their limbs tremble, and their physical strength fails, and their thoughts become overwhelmed. Then the mind is left free to comprehend what it may perceive ; as it is said of Abraham—and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him :‡ and as it is said of Daniel,§ and my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength.||

* *אִשִּׁים*, men. This term is applied by the Rabbies to their tenth and lowest degree of angels, because they are supposed to be nearest to men, and to make communications to the prophets. Chap. ii. sect. 8, 9, 10.

† Num. xii. 6.

‡ Gen. xv. 12.

§ Dan. x. 8.

|| Vorst, in his notes on this section, remarks, that Rabbi Albo reduces the prophetic grades to four. The first and lowest is, when a man by the Spirit bursts out in the praises of God, so as to carry away his hearers in admiration by deep wisdom and graceful oratory, while he himself does not know whence this knowledge has come to him. To this class of prophets David and Solomon are referred. The second grade is, when the imaginative and rational faculties are both equally affected. The third, when appearances of things are

4. Things which are made known to a prophet in prophetic vision, are made known to him parabolically (or by symbol,) and immediately the interpretation of the parable (or symbol,) is engraven on his mind in prophetic vision, and he knows its meaning. Thus the ladder which our father Jacob saw, on which angels were ascending,* was a symbol of kingdoms and their subjection. Thus also the living creatures which Ezekiel saw,† and the boiling pot and the rod of an almond tree which Jeremiah saw,‡ and the roll which Ezekiel saw,† and the ephah which Zechariah saw ;§ and thus of the other prophets. Some among them, like these, relate the symbol and its interpretation ; some the interpretation only : and others again often relate the symbol merely without the interpretation, as (is the case) partly with the language of Ezekiel and Zechariah : but all of them prophesied by parable (or symbol,) and enigmatically.||

really discerned, and the intellectual faculty prevails over the imaginative : as was the case in the visions of Ezekiel. The fourth, which is the highest degree, is when the prophetic revelation is perceived without the aid of the imaginative faculty, and accomplished without the sight of any appearance or angel. Whoever has arrived at this grade, it is said, ought not to be denominated a man, but an angel. This excellence is peculiar to Moses.

* Gen. xxviii. 12.

† i. 5, ss. ; ii. 9.

‡ i. 11, 13.

§ v. 6.

|| Vorst observes, that, in addition to this method of prophesying by objects of sight or signs, another may be added, namely, by words or actions. By words, as when Messiah, Antichrist, the state of the

5. All the prophets did not prophesy at any time, according to their inclination ; but they prepared their minds and sat alone, joyous and cheerful, since prophecy does not dwell with sorrow and inertness, but with joy. The sons of the prophets, therefore, (had) before them the nablā* and the tabret and the pipe and the harp, and (thus) they sought prophecy : † and this is what is meant by—and they prophesied ; ‡ that is, they went in the way of prophecy † until they did prophesy ; as if you should say, such an one makes himself great. Those who sought to prophesy were called sons of the prophets : but notwithstanding their preparation of mind, it still remained uncertain whether the shechinah would rest upon them or not.

6. All that we have said relates to the mode of prophecy common to all the prophets, both former and later, except Moses our master, the chief of all the prophets. And what is the difference between the prophetic gift of Moses and that of all the other prophets ? That all the prophets saw in a dream or in a vision, but Moses our master saw while awake and standing, as it is said ;

Church, and so forth, are predicted ; and by actions, as when Ezekiel is commanded to do certain things. Several of the latter cases, however, are comprehended under the author's idea of parable or symbol.

* A sort of lyre or harp.

† He means, they adopted the proper means to fit themselves for becoming prophets, they behaved like prophets.

‡ Or, made themselves prophecy : מִתְנַבְּאִים.

and when Moses went to the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of him speaking to him.*

7. The prophets in general (received divine communications) through the instrumentality of an angel; therefore they saw what they saw in parable (or figure, or symbol,) and enigmatically: Moses our master not through an angel, as it is said—with him will I speak mouth to mouth.† And it is said—and the Lord spoke to Moses face to face:‡ and again—and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold.† By all which it is indicated,§ that there was no figure (or symbol,) but he saw the thing clearly without any figure. And this is what the law attests respecting him:—in evident appearance, and not in enigmas;|| (meaning) that he did not prophesy in a dark, enigmatical manner, but perspicuously, because he saw the thing clearly.

8. The prophets in general were afraid and troubled, and melted away (as it were through terror,) but Moses our master was not so. And this is implied where it is said¶—as a man speaketh with his friend; that is, as a man is not troubled at the words of his companion, so was there

* Num. vii. 89.

† Num. xii. 8.

‡ Exod. xxxiii. 11.

§ Lit., that is to say.

|| Num. xii. 8. The English translation is, “even apparently and not in dark speeches.”

¶ Exod. xxxiii. 11. Lit., this is what the scripture saith.

force of mind in Moses our master, to understand the words of prophecy, and to stand firm and unmoved.*

9. The prophets in general did not prophesy whenever they were disposed to do so. With Moses our master the case was otherwise, for the Holy Spirit came upon him† and prophecy rested on him at any time that he desired; neither was it necessary for him to compose and prepare his mind for it, for indeed he was (always) composed and prepared, and stood like the ministering angels. Therefore he prophesied at any time, as it is said—stand and I will hear what the Lord will command concerning you.‡ And by this God gave him confidence, as it is said—go, say to them,

* Lit., and he stands perfectly (or safely) in his position. The original is, וַיְהִי עֹמֵד עַל עַמּוּד שָׁלֵם, which is rendered by Vorst, et perfectus in sua permanebat constantia, and by Bernard, “whilst retaining all its faculties unimpaired.” The idea given by these learned men is undoubtedly implied, but the direct meaning of the words is, I think, as I have translated them. There appears to be a reference to what is said in Daniel viii. 17, 18: “so he came near where *I stood*,” עֹמְדִי—“and he touched me *and set me upright*,” וַיַּעֲמִידֵנִי עַל עַמּוּדִי he *made me stand in my place*. This agrees with what the author had said before, in the sixth section, “Moses saw while awake and *standing*,” עֹמֵד.

† Lit., clothed him. Comp. Judges vi. 34, and other similar places. Here it may be remarked, that in scripture the figure of clothing does not denote the outward appearance merely. It is almost always employed to express the reality of the character, or disposition, or influence with which it is connected. See Job viii. 22. Ps. xxxv. 26; cix. 17–19. (18–20.) Isa. lix. 17; lxi. 10. Rom. xiii. 14.

‡ Num. ix. 8.

return to your tents, but do thou stand here by me.*

10. Hencet† you learn that the prophets in general, when the prophecy departed from them, returned to their tents, that is, (yielded) to all their bodily requirements, like other people ; and consequently they did not live apart from their wives. But Moses our master did not return to his former tent, therefore he kept apart from the woman (or wife) forever, and from every other,‡ and his mind became firmly attached to the everlasting rock,§ and the glory never departed from him, and his face shone, and he became (or appeared) sanctified like the angels.

11. The prophetic gift of a prophet may indeed be intended exclusively for himself, to enlarge his mind and to increase his knowledge, until he became acquainted with what he did not before know of these great matters. But he may also be sent to some of the various nations of the earth,|| or to the men of a city or kingdom, in order to direct them aright, and to show them what

* Deut. v. 30, 31.

† Lit., behold.

‡ Lit., from the like of her. See the note on Kimchi's Commentary on Hosea, p. 170. It is unnecessary to note, that this Rabbinical gloss adopted by Maimonides is far fetched and extravagant.

§ Or, the rock of the world, as Vorst and Bernard render the original. The author most probably refers to Isaiah xxvi. 4, where the Syriac and Septuagint both have *everlasting*. And this agrees best with the context and the general style of scripture.

|| Lit., to a people of the peoples of the earth.

they ought to do, or with the view of restraining them from the wicked works which they were practising.* And when he is sent, a sign or a wonder† is given‡ to him, in order that the people may know, that God hath really sent him.

* Lit., which were in their hands.

† A sign or a wonder; that is, the *power* of working one. Thus, in Psalm lxxii. 1, "judgment and righteousness" are used for the *faculty* of exercising them; in 1 Cor. xii. 7, "the manifestation of the Spirit" signifies the *ability* to display certain gifts which he had imparted; and most probably, in Matt. xiv. 2, *αἱ δυνάμεις* means the *power* of working miracles, which Herod imagined to be influencing the risen John.

‡ The words in the original are plural, and the agent is implied. The literal translation would be;—when they send him, they give him. And so in the next section, where the participles are in the plural, although I have translated the clauses—"he is sustained—we sustain them." In the preceding chapter also, on the origin of idolatry, section third, what is rendered—"which had been made known to him," is literally, which they had made known to him. This usage is very common in Hebrew. Thus Maimonides says—"they pardon him,"—for, he is pardoned; "they judge him,"—meaning, he is judged, (for future judgment is the subject,) "according to his actions;" and immediately afterwards—"they award to him good, and—evil." See his Treatise on Repentance, chap. i. sect. 7; chap. v. sect. 6. Several other instances of this idiom may be found in the same work, as in chap. v. sect. 6, towards the end; chap. vi. sect. 2, where the plural occurs twice for—it (or he) should be punished; chap. vii. sect. 8, and other places. We find also the same usage in the book of Daniel. Thus, in ii. 30: "this secret is not revealed to me for any wisdom that I have more than any living, but in order that the interpretation may be made known to the king:" literally, in order that they may make known, &c. Our English translation is exceedingly unfortunate; indeed it gives no intelligible sense, and betrays a want of acquaintance with the idiom of the original: "for *their* sakes that shall make known the inter-

12. But we do not believe every one that works a sign or a wonder to be a prophet, but only the man whom we have known from the beginning* to have been fit for prophecy: to have raised himself by his wisdom and his works above all the men of his age, and to have walked in the way of prophecy, in holiness and separation.† Afterwards, (if) he come and do a sign or a wonder, and say that God hath sent him, the command is to hear him, as it is said—unto him shall ye hearken.‡

13. It is possible also that (a man) may work a sign or a wonder without being a prophet. In such a case the sign is suspicious, and still the command is to hearken to him. Inasmuch as he was a great and wise man, and fit for prophecy, he is sustained (as a prophet,) on the presumptive evidence of his claims. For thus we are commanded; as we are also commanded to decide a

pretation to the king.”—Also in iii. 4, “it is commanded,” is literally, they command; iv. 13, (16.) “let his heart be changed,” is literally, let them change; and this is followed by the passive singular—“and let a beast’s heart be given.” Comp. also 22, (25,) and v. 21. See also Num. xv. 34, where the Hebrew פָּרַשׁ, was explained, made known, is translated in the Sept. συνίγγιναι. It is not improbable, that the plural “they may receive,” in Luke xvi. 9, may be used in accordance with the same idiom. The language of the whole verse has an evident bearing on the narration before given of the unjust steward’s conduct; but this is not at all inconsistent with the supposition just stated.

* Lit., from his beginning. It may mean, from his early years.

† Separation from whatever is carnal and worldly.

‡ Deut. xviii. 15.

cause on the authority* of two proper witnesses. They may indeed have testified falsely ; yet, inasmuch as, in our estimation,† they are proper persons, we sustain them on the presumption that they are so.‡ And respecting these and other similar matters, it is said ;—the secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which have been revealed, to us and to our children ;§ and it is said—for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.||

* Lit., at the mouth.

† Lit., with us.

‡ Lit., on account of their fitness.

§ Deut. xxix. 28, (29.)

|| 1 Sam. xvi. 7.

EXTRACTS
FROM THE
MOREH NEVOCHIM OF
MAIMONIDES.

FROM THE MOREH NEVOCHIM.

PART II. CHAPTER XLI.

It is not necessary for me to explain the meaning of a dream, but (only of) a vision, of which it is said,* I will make myself known unto him in a vision; and this is what is called prophetic vision, and it is denoted also by the phrase—the hand of the Lord, and also by the word, מִחֹזֶה, sight. It is a fearful thing, producing terror, which seizes the prophet† in a time when he is awake, as it is evidently stated in Daniel, where he says: and I saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me, for my comeliness was turned in me into corruption, and I retained no strength. And (again) he says: and I was in a deep sleep upon my face, and my face toward the ground.‡ And indeed the discourse of the angel, and his making him stand up, all took place in prophetic vision. And, in such circumstances the senses are

* Lit., and as to it they say. Num. xii. 6.

† Lit., is joined to.

‡ Dan. x. 8, 9.

quiescent;* and this influence comes to the rational faculty, and hence effects the imaginative, and thus perfectly accomplishes its work.† Sometimes prophecy begins in prophetic vision, and afterwards that terror increases, and the deep distress‡ which takes place, when the operations of the imagination are completed; and then comes prophecy. And thus it came to Abraham, of whom it occurs in the beginning of the§ prophecy,

* Lit., cease from their operations.

† The author's meaning is, that in divine communications there is made to the imagination a representation of what is predicted, the nature and import of which are perceived by the understanding, which of course retains its natural ability, and is so divinely influenced as to enable it to comprehend the meaning of what is thus communicated. Hence it is well remarked by Dr. John Smith, in his valuable discourse on Prophecy, "that the prophetic spirit doth never alienate the mind, seeing it seats itself as well in the rational powers as in the sensitive, but always maintains a consistency and clearness of reason and solidity of judgment, where it comes; it doth not ravish the mind, but inform and enlighten it." This he proceeds to contrast with a pretended spirit of prophecy, of which he says afterwards: "The prince of darkness comes not within the sphere of light and reason to order affairs there, but that is left to the sole œconomy and sovereignty of the Father of lights. There is a clear and bright heaven in man's soul, in which Lucifer himself cannot subsist, but is tumbled down from thence, as often as he essays to climb up into it." Smith's Ten Discourses were published in one quarto volume, in 1660, and this on Prophecy may be found in Watson's Theological Tracts, Vol. IV. pp. 297—362. It contains the views on this subject of the more prominent of the Jewish Rabbies. The passages above quoted may be found on pages 314 and 317 of the Tracts.

‡ Lit., strong suffering.

§ Lit., that. He means the one referred to immediately after.

the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, and in the end of it, and a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and so forth; and afterward, and he said to Abram.*

Know also, that all the prophets who mention prophecy as coming to them, ascribe it either to an angel, or to the blessed God, although it was by means of an angel without doubt. On this point, our rabbies of blessed memory long ago delivered their opinion, in explaining, and the Lord said to her,† thus : by means of an angel. And know further, that whenever it is written that an angel spake with one, or that the word of the Lord came to him, this has not taken place in any other way than in a dream or in prophetic vision.

There is an ancient agada‡ respecting communications made to the prophets, as they are recounted in the prophetic books, which states that§ they were made in four ways. First: the prophet makes known that the communication was made by an angel in a dream or vision. Secondly: he merely mentions the communication of the angel to him, without explaining that it was made in a dream or vision, because of the well established principle,|| that prophecy is confined

* Gen. xv. 1, 12, 13.

† Gen. xxv. 23.

‡ This word is used by the Rabbies to denote a discourse, historical, theological, or mystical, on some portion of scripture.

§ Lit., according to which.

|| Lit., because it rests on what was before known.

to one or other of these two methods : I will make myself known to him in a vision, I will speak unto him in a dream.* Thirdly : the angel is not mentioned at all, but the communication is ascribed to God the blessed one, who speaks it to him, but who makes known that it comes to him in a vision or dream. Fourthly : the prophet simply declares that God spoke to him, or said to him, do this, or, say this, without explaining either by mentioning an angel or by mentioning a dream, on account of the well established fundamental principle, that prophecy or prophetic revelation comes only in dream or in vision, and through the agency of an angel.

As an illustration of the first of these ways, it is said ; and the angel of God spake unto me in a dream, Jacob :† and the angel‡ said unto Balaam. Of the second, we have as follows : and God said unto Jacob, arise, go up to Bethel ;—and God said unto him, thy name is Jacob ;§—and the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time :||—and God said to Noah.¶ Of the

* Num. xii. 6.

† Gen. xxxi. 11.

‡ Num. xxii. 12. In the original the word is **אֱלֹהִים**, which Maimonides understands of an angel. But he is undoubtedly mistaken, as there is no reason for abandoning the usual sense of the term.

§ Gen. xxxv. 1, 10.

|| Gen. xxii. 15. It is quite preposterous to suppose that this was done in a dream or vision, the circumstances in which Abraham was placed, show that it was an audible communication made to him while awake.

¶ Gen. vii. 1.

third is that which is said : the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision.* Of the fourth are such as these ; and the Lord said unto Abraham ; and the Lord said unto Jacob, return ; and the Lord said unto Joshua ; and the Lord said unto Gideon.† And thus also, it is often said, and the Lord said unto me ; and the word of the Lord was to me ; and the word of the Lord was ; and behold, the word of the Lord was to him ; the beginning of the word of the Lord by Hosea ; the hand of the Lord was upon me.‡ This class is exceedingly numerous.

Whatever is communicated in any of these four ways is prophecy, and the speaker a prophet. But that of which it is said, and God came to such an one in a dream at night, is not necessarily prophecy, nor the man (of whom it is said) a prophet : for such communication may be merely suggestion from God§ to that man, and afterwards it is explained to us that the suggestion was made in a dream. For, inasmuch as God is the occasion, that one man is incited to deliver another or to put him to death, so is God the occasion (cause)

* Gen. xii. 1.

† Gen. xxxi. 3. Joshua iii. 7. Judges vii. 2.

‡ Isa. viii. 1. Ezek. xxiv. 20, ss. 1 Kings xix. 9. Hosea i. 1. Ezek. xxxvii. 1.

§ Lit., for the sense of it may be, that suggestion came from God. I have rendered the original word **הערה** suggestion, supposing it to be from **עיר**, to rouse, wake up, excite attention. But I am by no means certain that this is the author's meaning.

of the production of those things which he wishes to be produced in a dream at night. For we cannot doubt that Laban the Syrian was a thoroughly wicked man, and also an idolater ; and although Abimelech was a good man among his people, yet of old Abraham our father said of* his country and of his kingdom—surely the fear of God is not in this place.† And yet of each of these two, that is to say, of Laban and Abimelech, the same language occurs : and God came to Abimelech in a dream by night.‡ Observe also this, and consider the difference between its being said,§ and God came, and its being said, and God spake ; and between its being said, in a dream by night, and its being said, in vision, by night. Of Jacob it is said,|| and God spake unto Israel in visions of the night ;¶ but of Laban and Abimelech, and God came and so forth. And all this is explained by Onkelos, (thus :) and the word came from the Lord ; but he does not say of those two, and the Lord revealed himself.

Furthermore it ought to be known,** that the expression—and the Lord said to such an one—is

* Buxtorf, in his translation adds, *of himself*, *de ipso*. On what authority I do not know. It would seem to be inconsistent with what the author had said immediately before, that Abimelech was a good man among his people, when it is considered that he sets him in contradistinction to the idolatrous and wicked Laban.

† Gen. xx. 11.

§ Lit., his saying.

¶ xlv. 2.

‡ Gen. xx. 3. xxxi. 24.

|| Lit., it comes, occurs.

** Lit., know thou.

used, when, strictly speaking, he has no prophetic vision,* but the communication is made to him by means of a prophet. And thus it is written; and she went to enquire of the Lord.† And they‡ say plainly, (she went) to the school of Shem and Eber, and he§ answered her; and yet|| it is said in reference to him, and the Lord said to her. And although the expression—and the Lord said unto her—is elsewhere¶ explained to mean, through the agency of an angel; yet this must be understood, either of Eber himself, the term angel, (messenger,) being often applied to a prophet, as I have proved; or the angel who came to Eber in that prophecy is signified; or else it will be (intended) to show, that whenever you find the communication ascribed directly and absolutely to God, it was made by means of an angel. And this was the case with respect to the other prophets, as we have shown.

* Lit., and this was not to such an one, and prophetic vision did not come to him at all.

† Gen. xxv. 22.

‡ That is, the Rabbies.

§ That is, one of them, meaning Eber, whom he afterwards mentions. Or, it, that is, the school.

|| I have followed the Latin nihilominus of Buxtorf, which the context seems to require. The Hebrew is בעבור. Does the author mean, in the continuance, passing on, of the narrative?

¶ By the Rabbies. The literal translation is, although it is also said, and the Lord said unto her, by means of an angel.—The reader cannot fail to perceive that the Rabbinical exposition which the author here sanctions is unfounded and extravagant.

CHAPTERS XLII—XLV.

The author continues the subject in these chapters. He remarks, that it is a matter of indifference whether the appearance of an angel is originally mentioned ; or whether it would seem, from the narrative, that at first the prophet supposes him to be a mere man, but towards the end becomes satisfied that he is an angel. He illustrates this principle by the remarkable instances stated in Gen. xviii. and xxxii. and even applies it to the history in Num. xxii. which he supposes to have taken place in prophetic vision ; and also to Josh. v. 13. and other places.—In the 43rd chapter, he treats of parabolical representations or symbols ; in the 44th, of the various ways of which the prophet perceived and recognized the divine communications ; and in the 45th, of the various grades of prophecy, the term being understood in a wide and comprehensive sense. He makes seven of these grades, as follows.

1. When a man is excited by divine aid to do some great and good action. This is the grade of all the judges of Israel, and of their most distinguished chiefs. The spirit which influenced them did not impart the faculty of speaking, but of acting.

2. When a man feels inwardly a matter pressing upon him, and a power inciting him to speak,

and he speaks in wisdom, or expresses his emotions in praises or elevated exhortation, or in moral and divine strains; and all this in a wakeful state, and with the exercise of his senses. Such an one is said to speak by the Holy Spirit. Multitudes of instances occur in scripture, so that any specification is unnecessary.

3. This is the first of that class to which is applied the language—and the word of the Lord came unto me—or what is equivalent. Here the prophet sees the parable or symbol, in a really prophetic dream, in which also the meaning of the symbol is explained to him. This applies to the prophecies of Zechariah.

4. When the prophet distinctly hears the communication in the prophetic vision, without seeing the speaker; as in the case of Samuel.

5. When in a dream a man is made to communicate; as in some prophecies of Ezekiel, for example that in chapter xl. See verse 4.*

6. When an angel speaks in a dream, which is very common.

7. When it appears to the person in a prophetic dream, as if God were speaking with him: as in the case of Isaiah, vi. 1, and of Micaiah, 1 Kings xxii. 19.†

* It is surprising that Maimonides should not have recollected what he had stated in the 42nd chapter, for the seeming man is doubtless an angel.

† It is evident, that neither of these instances illustrates the author's statement. The former was probably a vision, and the latter a parabolical representation.

8. When a revelation is made to one in prophetic vision, and he sees parabolical representations or symbols ; as in Gen. xv.

9. When he hears words in a vision ; as in Gen. xv. 4.

10. When he sees a man speaking with him in prophetic vision ; as Abraham did among the oaks of Mamre, and Joshua at Jericho.

11. When he sees an angel speaking with him in vision ; as on the occasion of the binding of Isaac.

Immediately afterwards the author expresses his doubts respecting the three last, and seems disposed to reduce the whole number to eight.

CHAPTER XLVI.

FROM a single individual, you may draw a conclusion* respecting all the individuals of the class, and (thus) it becomes known that the character of all the others is the same. And it is my wish in this discourse, that from the character of one of the prophetic narrations, you may (be able to) form a conclusion respecting all the narrations of the same kind.

Agreeably to this design, it is to be understood,†

* Lit., take a proof.

† Lit., thou wilt know.

that, as in a dream a man may seem to have formerly gone to a certain country, to have married a wife, and spent a considerable time there, to have had by her a son called by some particular name, and (to have done) various other matters;* the same is the case also with regard to those prophetic parables (or symbols) which are seen or done in prophetic vision. Whatever that symbolical representation teaches respecting any of the actions or things which the prophet does, the space of time indicated by it as intervening between different actions, and removals from one place to another; all these take place in prophetic vision, and they are not to be considered as real and sensible actions, although some of them may be mentioned in the prophetic books with great particularity. For, after it became known that

* I am not certain that I have given the true meaning of the author in this last clause. The original is **וְהָיָה מֵעַנְיָו מֵהַ שְׂהִיָּה** which Buxtorf understands of the son, and intending to give the general thought, translates, *et qui talis aut talis fuerit*. So also Smith, in his discourse on Prophecy, ubi. sup. chap. vi. p. 328: "of such a disposition and the like." Having occasion to quote the passage in my Companion to the Book of Genesis, Note 69, p. 252, and supposing also that the words referred to the son, I had endeavored to express the idea loosely, thus: "and of whom this and that may be said." It would seem more probable, that Maimonides has in view the principal character of his illustration, the man who is dreaming. If so, he may mean what I have expressed in the text; or he may refer to the man's business, and the correct translation may be "of a certain occupation." The words literally rendered would be, "and there was of his matter (or occupation,) that which was."

the whole communication was made in prophetic vision, it became unnecessary, in mentioning any particular portion of the parabolical representation, to repeat that this took place in prophetic vision; as the prophet says, and the Lord said unto me, and it is (equally) unnecessary to explain that it was in a dream. But the people in general think, that these actions and removals and inquiries and answers did all take place really and to sensible apprehension, and not in prophetic vision. I will therefore state some instances beyond all doubt, adding to them others of the same class, which may serve to explain the cases which I have not introduced.*

Among the instances which are too clear to admit of a doubt, is the discourse of Ezekiel :†—I was sitting in my house and the elders of Judah were sitting before me, and so forth. And the spirit lifted me up between the earth and the heaven, and brought me in the visions of God to Jerusalem. Thus also what he says,‡ and I arose and went out into the plain. But it was in visions, as it is said of Abraham, and he brought him forth abroad and said; which was in vision.§

* For the reader who may not be much accustomed to the author's style, I subjoin as close a translation of this sentence as the English idiom will bear. "And I will mention to thee of such (lit. this,) that which a man will not doubt about, and I will add to it some which are of its kind; from this some (or part) that which I have not mentioned shall be made clear to thee."

† Chap. viii. sss.

‡ iii. 23.

§ See Gen. xv. 5, 1.

Thus it is said, and he set me down in the midst of the valley ;* but it was, in the visions of God. And in that vision in which he was transported to Jerusalem, Ezekiel mentions a matter in this language :† and behold, a hole in the wall. Then said he unto me, son of man, dig now in the wall ; and when I had digged in the wall, behold a door, and so forth. And as he perceived in visions that he was commanded to dig in the wall until he could enter and see what they were doing there, and he dug, (as it is mentioned) in the visions of God,‡ and entered by the hole, and saw what he saw ; all this was in prophetic vision. So also what is said to him, take thee a tile (or brick) and so forth ; and lie thou upon thy left side and so forth ; and take thou unto thee wheat and barley and so forth. And also what is said to him, and cause it (the razor,) to pass over on thy head and on thy beard :§ all this was done in prophetic vision. He appeared to do|| those actions which he was commanded to do. For it is inconsistent with the character of God, to suppose that he would make¶ his prophets like foolish persons and drunkards, and command them to act like such, and like the insane. Besides the last command was at variance with the law ;** for (Ezekiel) was a

* Ezek. xxxvii. 1.

† viii. 7, 8, 9.

‡ v. 3.

§ iv. 1, 4, 9 ; v. 1.

|| Lit., he saw that he did.

¶ Lit., far be it from God to make.

** The original here is very obscure. I have followed the Latin translation of Buxtorf.

priest, and bound to obey the two negative precepts respecting the corners of the beard and of the head.* Certainly it all took place in prophetic vision. And so also where it is said, as my servant Isaiah hath walked naked and barefoot;† this truly took place in visions of God. Persons of weak mind indeed do suppose, that in all this the prophet is relating that he was commanded to do thus, and that he did (so.) Thus he tells us, that he was commanded to dig in the wall which was on the mountain of the house,§ while at the same time he was in Babylonia. He states also that he dug; as he says, and I dug in the wall: but he had before plainly declared that this was done in the visions of God. And, as it is said of Abraham, the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision, saying; and it is said in that prophetic vision, and he brought him forth abroad, and said, look now toward heaven and number the stars;—this manifestly took place in prophetic vision; he seemed to be brought out from the place in which he was until he saw the heavens, and afterwards it was said to him, and number the stars, and he proceeded to number;—this is as it appeared to him. And thus I say, in the matter which was commanded to Jeremiah,* that he should hide the

* The author alludes to the precepts in Levit. xxi. 5, prohibiting the priests from “making baldness upon their head, and from shaving off the corner of their beard.”

† Isa. xx. 3.

‡ That is of the temple.

§ xiii. 4, 5, 6.

girdle near the Euphrates, and that he hid it, and then after a long time went to look for it, and found that it had long been decayed and ruined ; all these are parabolical representations (or symbols,) and Jeremiah did not go out of the land of Israel to Babylonia, neither did he see the Euphrates. So also what is said to Hosea,* take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms, and that whole matter, the birth of the children and the calling of them by particular names ; all of it took place in prophetic vision. For after it has been explained that these are parables (or symbols,) no room is left for doubt that each has a real existence ; but as it is said of them, the vision of all is become unto them like the words of a book and so forth.† And thus it appears to me, that the affair of Gideon with the fleece, and others of a similar kind, were indeed in vision. But I would not call it perfect prophetic vision ; for Gideon had not arrived at the grade of prophets, much less that of miracles, and his highest distinction‡ was to have attained (to a degree) like the (other) judges of Israel : and hence it is that of old they§ reckoned him among the light men of the world, as we have shown. It all took place in a dream, like that of Laban and Abimelech, as we have already mentioned. And

* i. 2.

† Isa. xxix. 11.

‡ Lit., perfection.

§ He means, the Rabbies.

so the discourse of Zechariah,* and I will feed the flock of slaughter and so forth, and the (whole) subject even to the end of it, (where) going down† he seeks the price (or hire,) and receives it, and counts the silver, and casts it in the house of the potter; all this he saw in prophetic vision: for the command to do it,‡ and the act of obedience, occurred either in prophetic vision or prophetic dream. And this is a matter of which there can be no doubt, and none can misapprehend it, except such as confound possible things with impossible.

From what I have said, a judgment may be formed respecting the cases which I have not adduced. All are of the same class and character, all are prophetic vision.§ And whatsoever may be said in that vision, that the individual did thus, or heard, or went out, or came in, or spoke, or was spoken to, or stood, or sat, or went up, or

* xi. 12, 13.

† The original is כְּנַחַת, which I suppose to be נַחַת with the prefix. Buxtorf omits it entirely.

‡ The Hebrew is, בַּעֲשׂוֹתוֹ. Should it not be written with a ב?

§ It is presumable, that the author intended this remark to be limited to cases similar to those before adduced by him. Doubtless there are very many instances of symbolical teaching, which cannot be explained on the principle laid down. The prophets often taught by real actions openly performed in the presence of the people, with a view to illustrate and impress the predicted declarations or warnings. In order to determine when the language is that of prophetic vision, and when it describes some sensible action, we must be acquainted with the usage of the prophets, and be guided by good sense and a

came down, or walked in the way, or asked, or was asked : the whole is in prophetic vision. And although the things related may be detailed at length, and circumstances of time and persons connected with them may be indicated, and also of place ; (yet) after it has been plainly shown you that the action is parabolical, (or symbolical,) you may be fully confident* that it took place in prophetic vision.

sound and religious discretion. It is very probable that some few of the cases adduced by Maimonides as illustrations of the former principle, admit of more satisfactory explanation by applying the latter

* Lit., know thou true knowledge.

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